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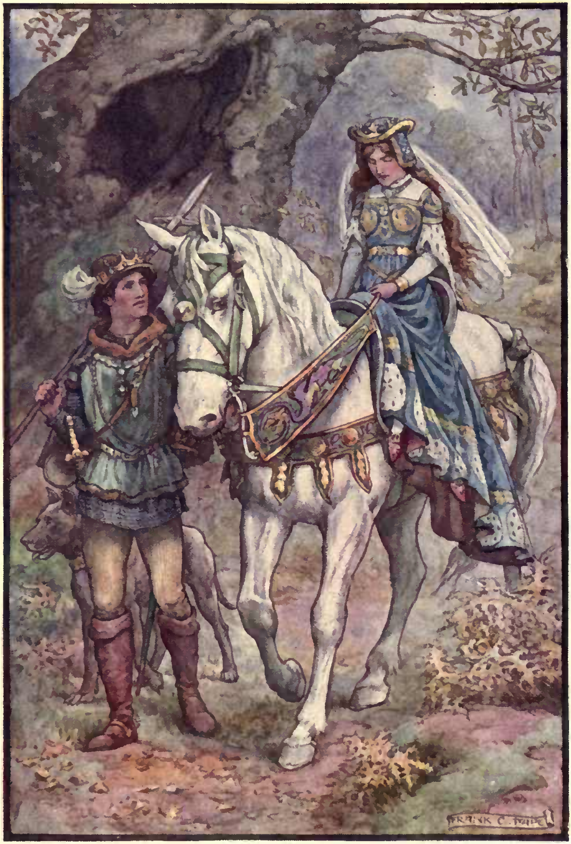
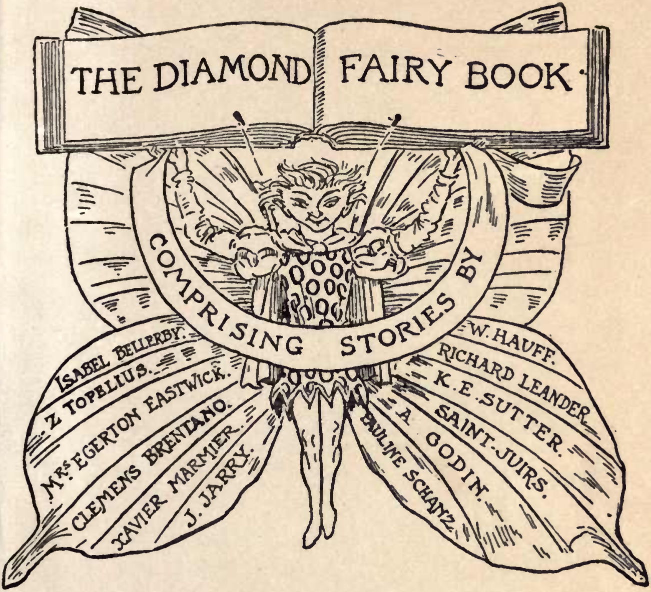

FRANK C. PAPÉ

"Upon the back of his noble steed the Prince gallantly lifted his beautiful charge."

FRONTISPIECE. *page 273*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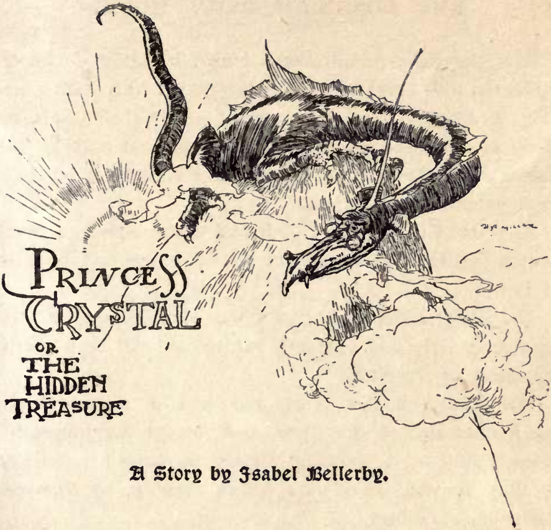


PRINCESS CRYSTAL
OR THE HIDDEN TREASURE

A Story by Isabel Bellerby.

THERE were the four Kings: the King of the North, the region of perpetual snow; the King of the South, where the sun shines all the year round; the King of the East, from whence the cold winds blow; and the King of the West, where the gentle zephyrs breathe upon the flowers, and coax them to open their petals while the rest of the world is still sleeping.

And there was the great Dragon, who lived on top of a high mountain in the centre of the universe. He could see everything that happened everywhere by means of his magic spectacles, which enabled him to look all ways at once, and to see through solid substances; but he could only see, not hear, for he was as deaf as a post.

Now the King of the North had a beautiful daughter called Crystal. Her eyes were bright like the stars; her hair was black like the sky at night; and her skin was as white as the snow which covered the ground outside the palace where she lived, which was built entirely of crystals clear as the clearest glass.

And the King of the South had a son who had been named Sunshine on account of his brightness and warmth of heart.

The King of the East had a son who, because he was always up early and was very industrious, had been given the name of Sunrise.

The King of the West also had a son, perhaps the handsomest of the three, and always magnificently dressed; but as it took him all day to make his toilette, so that he was never seen before evening, he received the name of Sunset.

All three Princes were in love with the Princess Crystal, each hoping to win her for his bride. When they had the chance they would go and peep at her as she wandered up and down in her glass palace. But she liked Prince Sunshine best, because he stayed longer than the others, and was always such excellent company. Prince Sunrise was too busy to be able to spare her more than half an hour or so; and Prince Sunset never came until she was getting too tired and sleepy to care to see him.

It was of no use, however, for her to hope that Sunshine would be her husband just because she happened to prefer him to the others. Her father—the stern, blusterous old King, with a beard made of icicles so long that it reached to his waist and kept his heart cold—declared that he had no patience for such nonsense as likes and dislikes; and one day he announced, far and wide, in a voice that was heard by the other three Kings, and which made the earth shake so that the great green Dragon immediately looked through his spectacles to see what was happening:

"He who would win my daughter must first bring me the casket containing the Hidden Treasure, which is concealed no man knows where!"

Of course the Dragon was none the wiser for looking through his spectacles, because the words—loud though they were—could not be heard by his deaf ears.

But the other Kings listened diligently; as did the young Princes. And poor Princess Crystal trembled in her beautiful palace lest Sunrise, who was always up so early, should find the treasure before Sunshine had a chance: she was not much afraid of the indolent Sunset, except that it might occur to him to look in some spot forgotten by his rivals.

Very early indeed on the following morning did Prince Sunrise set to work; he glided along the surface of the earth, keeping close to the ground in his anxiety not to miss a single square inch. He knew he was not first in the field; for the Northern King's proclamation had been made towards evening on the previous day, and Prince Sunset had bestirred himself for once, and had lingered about rather later than usual, being desirous of finding the treasure and winning the charming Princess.

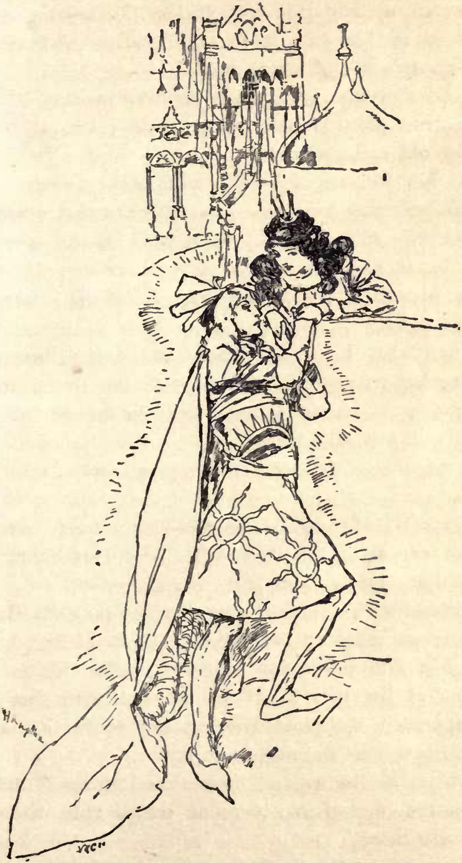
But the early morning was passing, and very soon the cheery, indefatigable Sunshine had possession of the entire land, and flooded Crystal's palace with a look from his loving eyes which bade her not despair.

Then he talked to the trees and the green fields and the flowers, begging them to give up the secret in return for the warmth and gladness he shed so freely on them. But they were silent, except that the trees sighed their sorrow at not being able to help him, and the long grasses rustled a whispered regret, and the flowers bowed their heads in grief.

Not discouraged, however, Prince Sunshine went to the brooks and rivers, and asked their assistance. But they, too, were helpless. The brooks gurgled out great tears of woe, which rushed down to the rivers, and so overcame them—sorry as they were on account of their own inability to help—that they nearly overflowed their banks, and went tumbling into the sea, who, of course, wanted to know what was the matter; but, when told, all the sea could do was to thunder a loud and continuous "No!" on all its beaches. So Prince Sunshine had to pass on and seek help elsewhere.

He tried to make the great Dragon understand; but it could not hear him. Other animals could, though, and he went from one to another, as cheerful as ever, in spite of all the "Noes" he had met with; until, at last, he knew by the twittering of the birds that he was going to be successful.

"We go everywhere and learn most things," said the swallows, flying up and down in the air, full of excitement and joy at being able to reward their beloved Sunshine for all his kindness to them. "And we know



"'MY ROBE IS OF SNOW,' SHE FALTERED" (p. 8).

this much, at any rate: the Hidden Treasure can only be found by him who looks at its hiding-place through the Dragon's magic spectacles."

Prince Sunshine exclaimed that he would go at once and borrow these wonderful spectacles; but a solemn-looking old owl spoke up:

"Be not in such a hurry, most noble Prince! The Dragon will slay any one—even so exalted a personage as yourself—who attempts to remove those spectacles while he is awake; and, as is well known, he never allows himself to sleep, for fear of losing some important sight."

"Then what is to be done?" asked the Prince, beginning to grow impatient at last, for the afternoon was now well advanced, and Prince Sunset would soon be on the war-path again.

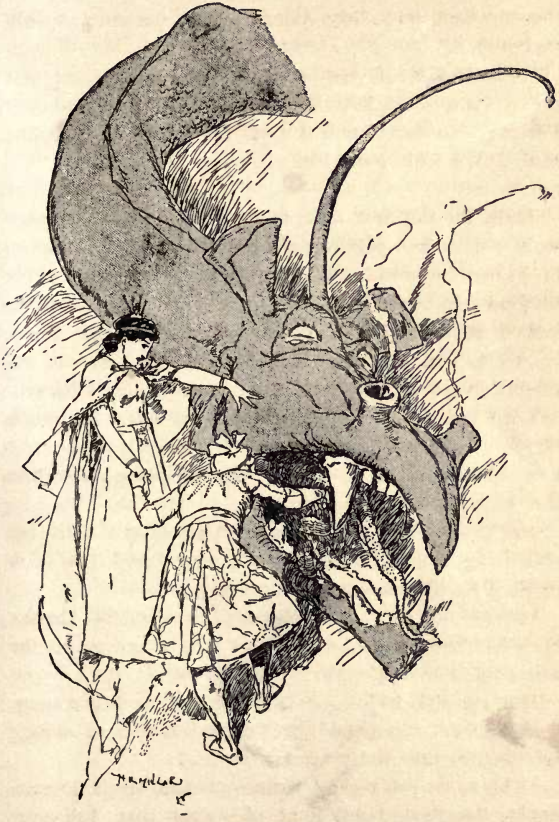
A majestic eagle came swooping down from the clouds.

"There is only one thing in all the world," said he, "which can send the Dragon to sleep, and that is a caress from the hand of the Princess Crystal."

Sunshine waited to hear no more. Smiling his thanks, he hastened away to put his dear Crystal's love to the test. She had never yet ventured outside the covered gardens of her palace. Would she go with him now, and approach the great Dragon, and soothe its savage watchfulness into the necessary repose?

As he made the request, there stole into the Princess's cheeks the first faint tinge of colour that had ever been seen there.

"My robe is of snow," she faltered; "if I go outside



"HE LEARNED THE SECRET AT ONCE" (*p.* 11).

these crystal walls into your radiant presence it will surely melt."

"You look as if you yourself would melt at my first caress, you beautiful, living snowflake," replied the Prince; "but have no fear: see, I have my own mantle ready to enfold you. Come, Princess, and trust yourself to me."

Then, for the first time in her life, Princess Crystal stole out of her palace, and was immediately wrapped in Prince Sunshine's warm mantle, which caused her to glow all over; her face grew quite rosy, and she looked more than usually lovely, so that the Prince longed to kiss her; but she was not won yet, and she might have been offended at his taking such a liberty.

Therefore, he had to be content to have her beside him in his golden chariot with the fiery horses, which flew through space so quickly that they soon stood on the high mountain, where the Dragon sat watching them through his spectacles, wondering what the Princess was doing so far from home, and what her father would think if he discovered her absence.

It was no use explaining matters to the Dragon, even had they wished to do so; but of course nothing was further from their intention.

Holding Prince Sunshine's hand to give her courage, the Princess approached the huge beast and timidly laid her fingers on his head.

"This is very nice and soothing," thought the Dragon, licking his lips; "very kind of her to come, I'm sure; but—dear me!—this won't do! I'm actually—going—to—sleep!"

He tried to rise, but the gentle hand prevented that. A sensation of drowsiness stole through all his veins, which would have been delightful but for his determination never to sleep. As it was, he opened his mouth to give a hiss that would surely have frightened the poor Princess out of her wits; but he fell asleep before he could so much as begin it; his mouth remained wide open; but his eyes closed, and his great head began to nod in a very funny manner.

Directly they were satisfied that he really slept, Prince Sunshine helped himself to the Dragon's spectacles, requesting the Princess not to remove her hand, lest the slumber should not last long enough for their purpose.

Then he put on the spectacles, and Princess Crystal exclaimed with fear and horror when—as though in result of his doing so—she saw her beloved Prince plunge his right hand into the Dragon's mouth.

Prince Sunshine had stood facing the huge beast as he transferred the spectacles to his own nose, and, naturally enough, the first thing he saw through them was the interior of the Dragon's mouth, with the tongue raised and shot forward in readiness for the hiss which sleep had intercepted; and under the tongue was the golden casket containing the Hidden Treasure!

The spectacles enabled the Prince to see through the cover; so he learned the secret at once, and knew why the King of the North was so anxious to possess himself of it, the great treasure being a pair of spectacles exactly like those hitherto always worn by the Dragon, and by him alone — which would keep the King informed of all that was going on in every corner of his kingdom, so that he could always punish or reward the right people and never make mistakes; also he could learn a great deal of his neighbours' affairs, which is pleasant even to a King.

The Princess was overjoyed when she knew the casket was already found; she very nearly removed her hand in her eagerness to inspect it; but, fortunately, she remembered just in time, and kept quite still until Prince Sunshine had drawn his chariot so close that they could both get into it without moving out of reach of the Dragon's head.

Then, placing the spectacles, not in their accustomed place, but on the ground just beneath, and laying the golden casket on the Princess's lap, the Prince said, as he gathered up the reins:

"Now, my dearly beloved Crystal—really mine at last—take away your hand, and let us fly, without an instant's delay, to the Court of the King, your royal father."

It is well they had prepared for immediate departure. Directly the Princess's hand was raised from the Dragon's head his senses returned to him, and, finding his mouth open ready for hissing, he hissed with all his angry might, and looked about for his spectacles that he might pursue and slay those who had robbed him; for, of course, he missed the casket at once.

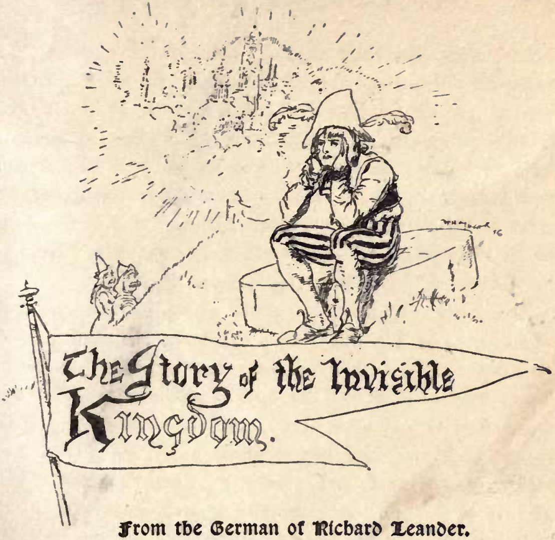
But he was a prisoner on that mountain and unable to leave it, though he flapped his great wings in terrible wrath when he saw the Prince and Princess, instead of driving down the miles and miles of mountain side as he had hoped, being carried by the fiery horses right through the air, where he could not reach them.

They only laughed when they heard the hiss and the noise made by the useless flapping of wings. Prince Sunshine urged on his willing steeds, and they arrived at the Court just as the King, Crystal's father, was going to dinner; and he was so delighted at having the treasure he had so long coveted, that he ordered the marriage to take place at once.

Prince Sunset called just in time to be best man, looking exceedingly gorgeous and handsome, though very disappointed to have lost the Princess; and the festivities were kept up all night, so that Prince Sunrise was able to offer his good wishes when he came early in the morning, flushed with the haste he had made to assure Prince Sunshine that he bore him no ill-will for having carried off the prize.

Princess Crystal never returned to her palace, except to peep at it occasionally. She liked going everywhere with her husband, who, she found, lived by no means an idle life, but went about doing good—grumbled at sometimes, of course, for some people will grumble even at their best friend—but more generally loved and blessed by all who knew him.

The Story of the Invisible Kingdom.



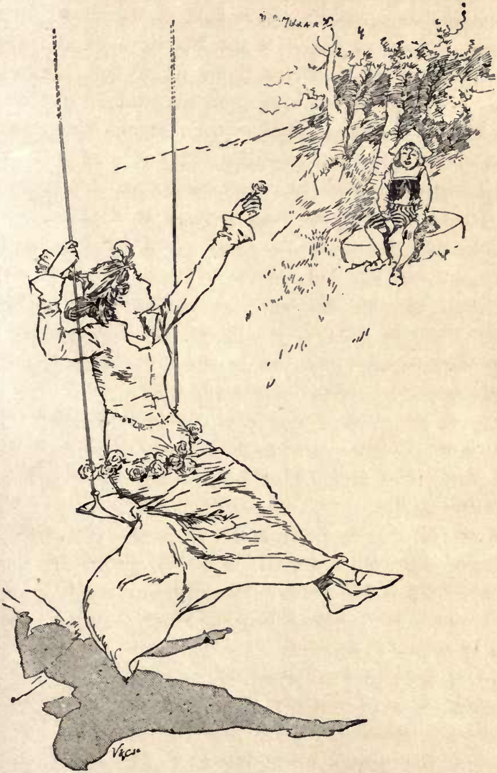
The Story of the Invisible Kingdom.

From the German of Richard Leander.

IN a little house half-way up the mountain-side, and about a mile from the other houses of the village, there lived with his old father a young man called George. There was just enough land belonging to the house to enable the father and son to live free from care.

Immediately behind the house the wood began, the oak trees and beech trees in which were so old that the grandchildren of the people who had planted them had been dead for more than a hundred years, but in front of the house there lay a broken old mill-stone—who knows how it got there? Any one sitting on the stone would have a wonderful view of the valley down below, with the river flowing through it, and of the mountains rising on the other side of the river. In the evening, when he had finished his work in the fields, George often sat here for hours at a time dreaming, with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands; and because he cared little for the villagers, but generally went about silent and absorbed like one who is thinking of all sorts of things, the people nicknamed him "George the Dreamer." But he did not mind it at all.

The older he grew, the more silent he became, and when at last his old father died, and he had buried him under a great old oak tree, he became quite silent. Then, when he sat on the broken mill-stone, as he did more often than before, and looked down into the lovely valley, and saw how the evening mists came into the valley at one end and slowly climbed the mountains, and how it then became darker and darker, until at last the moon and the stars appeared in the sky in their full glory, a wonderful feeling came into his heart. The waves of the river began to sing, quite softly at first, but gradually louder, until they could be heard quite plainly; and they sang of the mountains, down from which they had come, and of the sea, to which they wished to go, and of the nixies who lived far down at the bottom of the river. Then the forest began to rustle, quite differently from an ordinary forest, and it used to relate the most wonderful tales. The old oak tree especially, which stood at his father's grave, knew far more than all the other trees. The stars, high up in the sky, wanted so much to tumble down into the green forest and the blue water, that they twinkled and



"IN THE SWING SAT A CHARMING PRINCESS" (*p.* 20).

sparkled as if they could not bear it any longer. But the angels who stand behind the stars held them firmly in their places, and said: "Stars, stars, don't be foolish! You are much too old to do silly things—many thousand years old, and more. Stay quietly in your places."

It was truly a wonderful valley! But it was only George the Dreamer who heard and saw all that. The people who lived in the valley had not a suspicion of it, for they were quite ordinary people. Now and then they hewed down a huge old tree, cut it up into firewood, and made a high stack, and then they said: "Now we shall be able to make our coffee again for some time." In the river they washed their clothes; it was very convenient. And even when the stars sparkled most beautifully, they only said, "It will be very cold to-night: let us hope our potatoes won't freeze." Once George the Dreamer tried to bring them to see differently, but they only laughed at him. They were just quite ordinary people.

Now, one day as he was sitting on the mill-stone and thinking that he was quite alone in the world, he fell asleep. Then he dreamt that he saw, hanging down from the sky, a golden swing, which was fastened to two stars by silver ropes. In the swing sat a charming Princess, who was swinging so high that each time she touched the sky, then the earth, and then the sky again. Each time the swing came near the earth, the Princess clapped her hands with joy and threw George the Dreamer a rose. But suddenly the ropes broke, and the swing, with the Princess, flew far into the sky, farther and farther, until at last he could see it no longer.

Then he woke up, and when he looked round, he saw a great bunch of roses lying beside him on the mill-stone.

The next day he went to sleep again, and dreamt the same thing, and when he woke up the roses were lying on the stone by his side.

This happened every day for a whole week. Then George said to himself that some part of the dream must be true, because he always dreamt exactly the same thing. So he shut up his house, and set out to seek the Princess.

After he had travelled for many days, he saw in the distance a country where the clouds touched the earth. He hastened towards it, but came, on his way, to a large forest. Here he suddenly heard fearful groans and cries, and on approaching the place from which they seemed to come, he saw a venerable old man with a silver-grey beard lying on the ground. Two horribly ugly, naked fellows were kneeling on him, trying to strangle him. Then George the Dreamer looked round to see whether he could find some sort of weapon with which to run the two fellows through the body; but he could find nothing, so, in mortal terror, he tore down a huge tree-trunk. He had scarcely seized it when it changed in his hands into a mighty halberd. Then he rushed at the two monsters, and ran them through the body, and they let go the old man and ran away howling.

Then George lifted the old man up and comforted him, and asked him why the two fellows had wanted to choke him. The old man said that he was the King of Dreams, and had come by mistake into the kingdom of his greatest enemy, the King of Realities. The latter, as soon as he noticed this, had sent two of his servants to lie in wait for him and kill him.

"Have you then done the King of Realities any harm?" asked George the Dreamer.

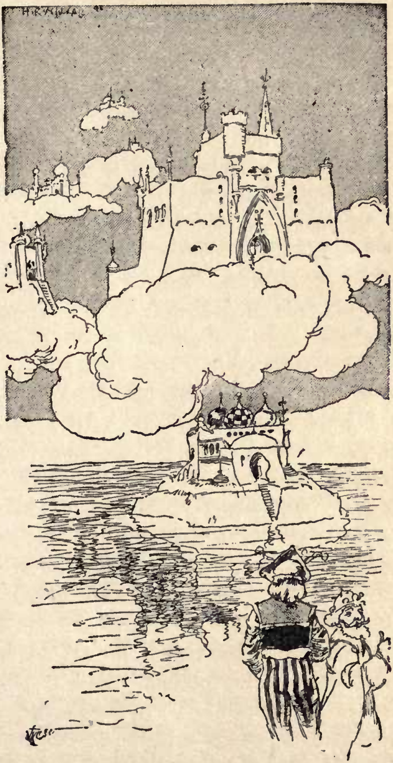
"God forbid!" the old man assured him. "He is always very easily provoked, that is his character. And me he hates like poison."

"But the fellows he sent to strangle you were quite naked!"

"Yes, indeed," said the King, "stark naked. That is fashion in the land of Realities; all the people, even the King, go about naked, and are not at all ashamed. They are an abominable nation. But now, since you have saved my life, I will prove my gratitude to you by showing you my country. It is the most glorious country in the whole world, and Dreams are my subjects."

Then the Dream-King went on in front and George followed him. When they came to the place where the clouds touched the earth, the King showed him a trapdoor that was so well hidden in the thicket that not even a person who knew it was there would have been able to find it. He lifted it up and led his companion down five hundred steps into a brightly lighted grotto that stretched for miles in undiminished splendour. It was unspeakably beautiful. There were castles on islands in the midst of large lakes, and the islands floated about like ships. If you wished to go into one of them, all you had to do was to stand on the bank and call out:—

Little castle, swim to me,
That I may get into thee.



"GEORGE COULD DO NOTHING BUT WONDER AND ADMIRE" (*p.* 24).

Then it came to the shore by itself. Farther on were other castles, on clouds, floating slowly in the air. But if you said:—

Float down, little castle in the air,
Take me up to see thy beauties rare,

they slowly floated down. Besides these, there were gardens with flowers which gave out a sweet smell by day, and a bright light by night; beautifully tinted birds, which told stories; and a host of other wonderful things. George could do nothing but wonder and admire.

"Now I will show you my subjects, the Dreams," said the King. "I have three kinds—good Dreams for good people, bad Dreams for bad people, and also Dream-goblins. With the last I amuse myself now and then, for a King must sometimes have a joke."

So he took George into one of the castles, which was so queerly built that it looked irresistibly comical.

"Here the Dream-goblins live: they are a tiny, high-spirited, roguish lot—never do any harm, but love to tease." Then he called to one of the goblins: "Come here, little man, and be serious a moment for once in your life. Do you know," he continued, addressing George, "what this rogue does if I, once in a way, allow him to go down to the earth? He runs to the next house, drags the first man he comes across, who is sound asleep, out of bed, carries him to the church tower, and throws him down, head over heels. Then he rushes down the stairs so as to reach the bottom first, catches the man, carries him home, and flings him so roughly into bed that the bedstead creaks horribly.

Then the man wakes up, rubs the sleep out of his eyes, and says: 'Dear me! I thought I was falling from the church tower. What a good thing it was only a dream.'"

"Is that the one?" cried George. "Look here, he has been to me before; but if he comes again, and I catch him, it will be the worse for him." He had scarcely finished speaking when another goblin sprang out from under the table. He looked like a little dog, for he had a very ragged waistcoat on, and he let his tongue hang out of his mouth.

"He is not much better," said the King. "He barks like a dog, and is as strong as a giant. When people in their dreams are frightened at something, he holds their hands and feet so that they cannot move."

"I know him, too," interrupted George. "When you want to run away, you feel as stiff and stark as a piece of wood. If you want to move your arms or your legs, you can't do it. But often it is not a dog, but a bear, or a robber, or some other horrid thing."

"I will never allow them to come to you again, George the Dreamer," the King assured him. "Now come and see the bad Dreams. But don't be afraid, they won't do you any harm—they are only for bad people."

Then they passed through a great iron door into a vast space, inclosed by a high wall. Here the most terrible shapes and most horrible monsters were crowded together; some looked like men, others like animals, others were half men and half animals. George was terrified, and made his way back to the iron door. But the King spoke kindly to him, and persuaded him to see more closely what wicked people have to dream. Beckoning to a Dream that stood near—a hideous giant, with a mill-wheel under each arm—he commanded him to tell them what he was going to do that night.

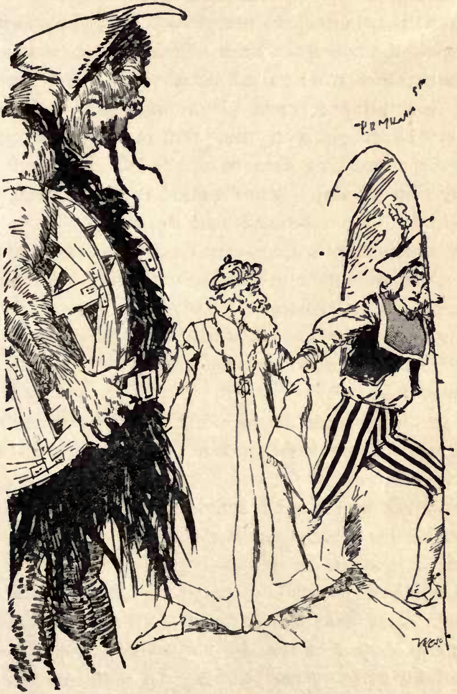
Then the monster raised his shoulders, wriggled about with joy, grinned until his mouth met his ears, and said: "I am going to the rich man, who has let his father starve. One day, when the old man was sitting on the stone steps before his son's house, begging for bread, the son came and said to the servants: 'Drive away that fellow.' So I go to him at night and pass him through my mill-wheels, until all his bones are broken into tiny pieces. When he is properly soft and quivering, I take him by the collar and shake him and say, 'See how you tremble now, you fellow!' Then he wakes up with his teeth chattering, and calls to his wife to bring him another blanket, for he is freezing. And when he has fallen asleep once more, I begin it all again."

When George the Dreamer heard this, he rushed out through the door, dragging the King after him, and crying out that he would not stay a moment longer with the bad Dreams. They were too horrible!

The King next led him into a lovely garden where the paths were of silver, the beds of gold, and the flowers, beautifully cut precious stones. Here the good Dreams were walking up and down. The first he saw was a pale young woman, with a Noah's Ark under one arm, and a box of bricks under the other.

"Who is that?" asked the Dreamer.

"She goes every evening to a little sick boy, whose mother is dead. He is quite alone all day, and no one



"GEORGE CRIED OUT THAT HE WOULD NOT STAY A MOMENT LONGER" (*p.* 26).

troubles about him, but towards evening she goes to him, plays with him, and stays the whole night. She goes early, because he goes to sleep early. The other Dreams go much later. Let us proceed; if you want to see everything, we must make haste."

Then they went farther into the garden, into the midst of the good Dreams. There were men, women, old men, and children, all with dear, good faces, and most beautifully dressed. Many of them were carrying all sorts of things: everything that the heart can possibly wish for. Suddenly George stood still and cried out so loudly that all the Dreams turned round to look.

"What is the matter?" said the King.

"There is my Princess—she who has so often appeared to me, and who gave me the roses," George the Dreamer answered, in an ecstasy.

"Certainly, certainly, it is she," said the King. "Have I not sent you a very pretty Dream? It is almost the prettiest I have."

Then George ran up to the Princess, who was sitting swinging in her little golden swing. As soon as she saw him coming she sprang down into his arms. But he took her by the hand and led her to a golden bench, on which they both sat down, telling one another how sweet it was to meet again! And when they had finished saying so, they began again. The King of Dreams meanwhile walked up and down the broad path which goes straight through the garden, with his hands behind his back. Now and then he took out his watch, to see how the time was getting on; for George the Dreamer and the Princess never came to an end of what they had to say to one another. At length he went to them, and said:

"That's enough, children. You, Dreamer, are far from your home, and I cannot keep you here over-night, for I have no beds. You see, the Dreams never sleep, but have to go up every night to men on the earth. And you, Princess, must make yourself ready; dress yourself all in pink, and then come to me, so that I may tell you to whom you must appear to-night, and what you must say."

When George the Dreamer heard this, he felt more courageous than ever before in his life. Standing up, he said firmly: My lord the King, I will never more leave my Princess. You must either keep me here below or let her go up with me to the earth: I love her much too much to live without her." Then a tear big as a hazel-nut came into each of his eyes.

"But George, George," answered the King, "it is the prettiest dream I have. Still, you saved my life; so have your own way; take your Princess up with you. But as soon as you have got on to the earth take off her silver veil, and throw it down to me through the trap-door. Then she will be of flesh and blood like every other child of man; now she is only a Dream."

George the Dreamer thanked the King most heartily, and then said: "Dear King, because you are so very good I should like to ask for one thing more. I have a Princess now—but no kingdom. A Princess without a kingdom is impossible. Cannot you get me one, if it is only a small one?"

Then the King answered: "I have no visible kingdoms to give away, Dreamer, only invisible ones; one of the latter you shall have, one of the biggest and best that I possess."

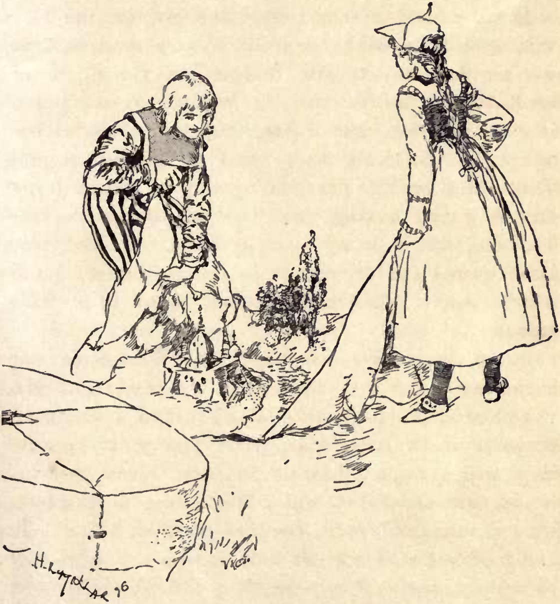
Then George asked what invisible kingdoms were like. The King told him he would find that out, and would be amazed at their beauty and magnificence.

"You see," he said, "it is often very unpleasant to have anything to do with ordinary, visible kingdoms. For example: suppose you are an ordinary King, and early one morning your Minister comes to your bedside and says: 'Your Majesty, I want a hundred pounds for the kingdom.' Then you open your treasury and find not even a farthing in it! What are you to do? Or again, you wage war and lose, and the King who has conquered you marries your Princess, and shuts you up in a tower. Such things cannot happen in invisible kingdoms."

"But if we cannot see it, of what use would our kingdom be to us?" asked George, still somewhat puzzled.

"You strange man," said the King, and pointing to his forehead, he continued: "You and your Princess see it well enough. You see the castles and gardens, the meadows and forests which belong to your kingdom. You live in it, walk in it, do what you like with it. It is only other people who do not see it."

Then the Dreamer was highly delighted, for he was beginning to be afraid lest the village people should look enviously at him if he came home with his Princess and was King. He took a very touching leave of the King of Dreams, climbed the five hundred steps with his Princess, took the silver veil off her head and threw it down. Then he wanted to shut the trap-door, but it was so heavy that he could not hold it. So he let it fall, and the noise it made was as great as the noise of many cannons shot off at the same time, and for a moment he became unconscious. When he came to himself again he was sitting in front of his cottage with the Princess sitting on the mill-stone at his side, and she was of flesh and blood like any other person. She



"THEY LIFTED UP THE CLOTH AND BEGAN TO SPREAD IT OUT" (*p.* 32).

was holding his hand, stroking it, and saying: "You dear, good, stupid man, you have not dared tell me how much you love me for such a long time. Have you been very much afraid of me?"

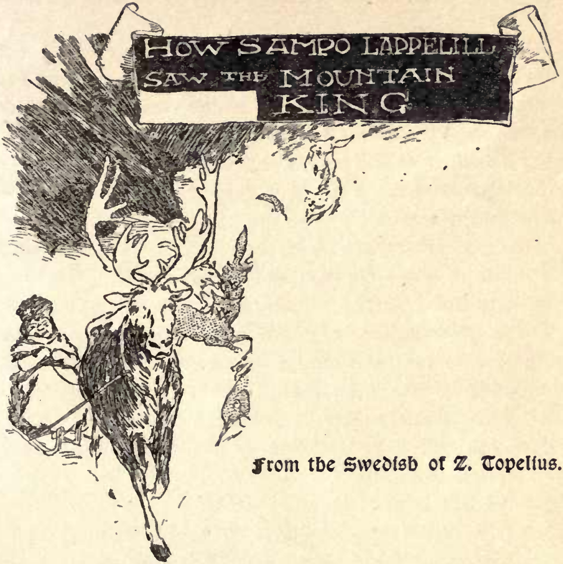
And the moon rose and illumined the river, the waves beat against the banks, and the forest rustled, but they still sat there and talked. Suddenly it seemed as if a small black cloud was passing over the moon, and all at once something like a large folded shawl fell at their feet; then the moon stood out again in her full glory. They lifted up the cloth and began to spread it out. But they took a long time over this, for it was very fine and folded many hundred times. When it was quite spread out, it looked like a large map; in the middle was a river, and on both sides were towns, forests, and lakes. Then they noticed that it was a kingdom, and knew that the good Dream-King must have sent it down to them from the sky. And when they looked at their little cottage it had become a beautiful castle, with glass stairs, marble walls, velvet carpets, and pointed blue-tiled towers. Then they took hands and went into the castle, where their subjects were already assembled. The servants bowed low, drums and trumpets sounded, and little pages went before them strewing flowers. They were King and Queen.

The next morning the news that George the Dreamer had come back, and had brought a wife with him, ran like wildfire through the village. "She is probably very clever," the people said. "I saw her early this morning, when I went into the forest," said a peasant; "she was standing at the door with him. She is nothing special, quite an ordinary person, small and delicate-looking, and rather shabbily dressed. What did he see in her? He has nothing, and she probably has nothing!"

So the stupid people chattered, for they could not see that she was a Princess; and in their stupidity they did not see that the house had changed into a great, wonderful castle—for the kingdom that had come down from the sky for George the Dreamer was an invisible one. So he did not trouble about the stupid people, but lived happily and contentedly in his kingdom with his Princess, who presented him with six children, each one more beautiful than the other, and they were all six Princes and Princesses. But no one in the village knew it, for they were quite ordinary people, and much too silly to notice it.

How Sampo Lappelill saw the Mountain King.

HOW SAMPO LAPPELILL SAW THE MOUNTAIN KING



From the Swedish of Z. Topelius.

FAR away in Lapland, at a place called Aīmīo, near the River Jana, there lived, in a little hut, a Laplander and his wife, with their small son, Sampo.

Sampo Lappelill was now between seven and eight years of age. He had black hair, brown eyes, a snub nose, and a wide mouth, which last is considered a mark of beauty in curious Lapland. Sampo was a strong child for his age; he delighted to dance down the hills in his little snow-shoes, and to drive his own reindeer in his own little sledge. The snow whirled about him as he passed through the deep drifts, until nothing of him could be seen except the tuft of his black forelock.

"I shall never feel comfortable while he is from home!" said the mother. "He may meet Hisü's reindeer with the golden antlers."

Sampo overheard these words, and wondered what reindeer it could be that had golden antlers. "It must be a splendid animal!" said he; "how much I should like to drive to Rastekaïs with it!" Rastekaïs is a high, dreary mountain, and can be seen from Aïmïo, from which it is five or six miles distant.

"You audacious boy!" exclaimed the mother; "how dare you talk so? Rastekaïs is the home of the trolls, and Hisü dwells there also."

"Who is Hisü?" inquired Sampo.

"What ears that boy has!" thought the Lapp-wife. "But I ought not to have spoken of such things in his presence; the best thing I can do now is to frighten him well." Then she said aloud: "Take care, Lappelill, that you never go near Rastekaïs, for there lives Hisü, the Mountain King, who can eat a whole reindeer at one mouthful, and who swallows little boys like flies."

Upon hearing these words, Sampo could not help thinking what good fun it would be to have a peep at such a wonderful being—from a safe distance, of course!

Three or four weeks had elapsed since Christmas, and darkness brooded still over Lapland. There was no morning, noon, or evening; it was always night. Sampo was feeling dull. It was so long since he had seen the sun that he had nearly forgotten what it was like. Yet he did not desire the return of summer, for the only thing he remembered about that season was that it was a time when the gnats stung very severely. His one wish was that it might soon become light enough for him to use his snow-shoes.

One day, at noon (although it was dark), Sampo's father said: "Come here! I have something to show you."

Sampo came out of the hut. His father pointed towards the south.

"Do you know what that is?" asked he.

"A southern light," replied the boy.

"No," said his father, "it is the herald of the sun. To-morrow, maybe, or the day after that, we shall see the sun himself. Look, Sampo, how weirdly the red light glows on the top of Rastekaïs!"

Sampo perceived that the snow upon the gloomy summit, which had been so long shrouded in darkness, was coloured red. Again the idea flashed into his mind what a grand sight the terrible Mountain-King would be—from a distance. The boy brooded on this for the remainder of the day, and throughout half the night, when he should have been asleep.

He thought, and thought, until at length he crept silently out of the reindeer skins which formed his bed, and then through the door-hole. The cold was intense. Far above him the stars were shining, the snow scrunched beneath his feet. Sampo Lappelill was a brave boy, who did not fear the cold. He was, moreover, well wrapped up in fur. He stood gazing at the stars, considering what to do next.

Then he heard a suggestive sound. His little reindeer pawed the ground with its feet. "Why should I not take a drive?" thought Sampo, and proceeded straightway to put his thought into action. He harnessed the reindeer to the sledge, and drove forth into the wilderness of snow.

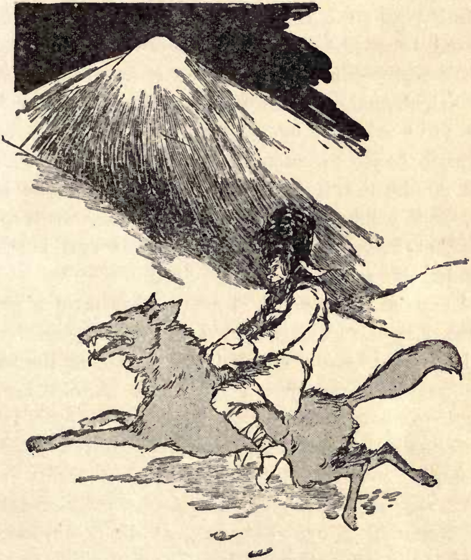
"I will drive only a little way towards Rastekaïs," said Sampo to himself, and off he went, crossing the frozen River Jana to the opposite shore, which—although the child was unaware of this fact—belonged to the kingdom of Norway.

As Sampo drove, he sang a bright little song. The wolves were running round his sledge like grey dogs, but he did not mind them. He knew well that no wolf could keep pace with his dear, swift little reindeer. Up hill and down dale he drove on, with the wind whistling in his ears. The moon seemed to be racing with him, and the rocks to be running backwards. It was thoroughly delightful!

Alas! at a sudden turning upon the downward slope of a hill the sledge overturned, and Sampo was pitched into a snow-drift. The reindeer did not observe this, and, in the belief that its master was still sitting behind it, it ran on. Sampo could not cry "Stop!" for his mouth was stuffed with snow.

He lay there in the darkness, in the midst of the vast, snowy wilderness, in which was no human habitation for miles around.

At first, he naturally felt somewhat bewildered. He scrambled unhurt out of the big snow-drift. Then, by the wan moonlight, he saw that he was surrounded on all sides by snow-drifts and huge mountains. One mountain towered above the others, and this he knew must be Rastekaïs, the home of the fierce Mountain King, who swallowed little boys like flies!



"THEY WENT OFF AT A GALLOP" (*p.* 42).

Sampo Lappelill was frightened now, and heartily wished himself safe at home. But how was he to get there?

There sat the poor child, alone in the darkness, amongst the desolate, snow-covered rocks, with the big, black shadow of Rastekaïs frowning down upon him. As he wept his tears froze immediately, and rolled down over his jacket in little round lumps like peas; so Sampo thought that he had better leave off crying, and run about in order to keep himself warm.

"Rather than freeze to death here," he said to himself, "I would go straight to the Mountain King. If he has a mind to swallow me, he must do so, I suppose; but I shall advise him to eat instead some of the wolves in this neighbourhood. They are much fatter than I, and their fur would not be so difficult to swallow."

Sampo began to ascend the mountain. Before he had gone far, he heard the trotting of some creature behind him, and a moment after a large wolf overtook him. Although inwardly trembling, Sampo would not betray his fear. He shouted:

"Keep out of my way! I am the bearer of a message to the King, and you hinder me at your peril!"

"Dear me!" said the wolf (on Rastekals all the animals can speak). "And, pray, what little shrimp are you, wriggling through the snow?"

"My name is Sampo Lappelill," replied the boy. "Who are you?"

"I," answered the wolf, "am first gentleman-usher to the Mountain King. I have just been all over the kingdom to call together his subjects for the great sun festival. As you are going my way, you may, if you please, get upon my back, and so ride up the mountain."

Sampo instantly accepted the invitation. He climbed upon the shaggy back of the wolf, and they went off at a gallop.

"What do you mean by the sun festival?" inquired Sampo.

"Don't you know *that*?" said the wolf. "We celebrate the sun's feast the day he first appears on the horizon after the long night of winter. All trolls, goblins, and animals in the north then assemble on Rastekaïs, and on that day they are not permitted to hurt each other. Lucky it was for you, my boy, that you came here to-day. On any other day, I should have devoured you long ago."

"Is the King bound by the same law?" asked Sampo anxiously.

"Of course he is," answered the wolf. "From one hour before sunrise until one hour after sunset he will not dare to harm you. If, however, you are on the mountain when the time expires, you will be in great danger. For the King will then seize whoever comes first, and a thousand bears and a hundred thousand wolves will also be ready to rush upon you. There will soon be an end of Sampo Lappelill!"

"But perhaps, sir," said Sampo timidly, "you would be so kind as to help me back again before the danger begins?"

The wolf laughed. "Don't count on any such thing, my dear Sampo; on the contrary, I mean to seize you first myself. You are such a very nice, plump little boy! I see that you have been fattened on reindeer milk and cheese. You will be splendid for breakfast to-morrow morning!"

Sampo began to think that his best course might be to jump off the wolf's back at once. But it was too late.

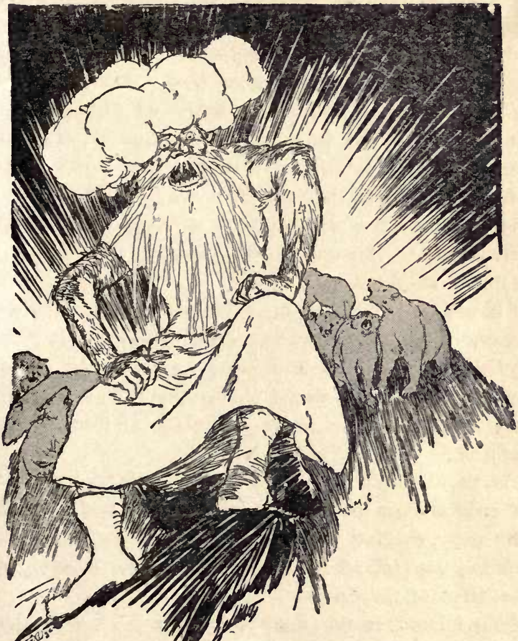
They had now arrived at the top of Rastekaïs. Many curious and marvellous things were there to be seen. There sat the terrible Mountain King on his throne of cloudy rocks, gazing out over the snow-fields. He wore on his head a cap of white snow-clouds; his eyes were like a full moon; his nose resembled a mountain-ridge His mouth was an abyss; his beard was like tufts of immense icicles; his arms were as thick and strong as fir trees; his coat was like an enormous snow-mountain. Sampo Lappelill had a good view of the King and his subjects, for a bow of dazzling northern lights shone in the sky and illuminated the scene.

All around the King stood millions of goblins, trolls, and brownies; tiny, grey creatures, who had come from remotest parts of the world to worship the sun. This they did from fear, not from love; for trolls and goblins hate the sun, and always hope that he will never return when they see him disappear at the end of summer.

Farther off stood all the animals of Lapland, thousands and thousands of them of all sizes; from the bear, the wolf, and the glutton, to the little mountain-rat, and the brisk, tiny reindeer-flea. No gnats appeared, however; *they* had all been frozen.

Sampo was greatly astonished at what he saw. Unobserved, he slipped from the wolf's back, and hid behind a ponderous stone, to watch the proceedings.

The Mountain King shook his head, and the snow whirled about him. The northern lights shone around his head like a crown of glory, sending long, red streamers across the deep blue sky; they whizzed and sparkled, expanded and drew together, fading sometimes, then again darting out like lightning over the snow-clad mountains.



"THE TERRIBLE MOUNTAIN KING" (*p.* 44).

This performance amused the King. He clapped with his icy hands until the sound echoed like thunder, causing the trolls to scream with joy, and the animals to howl with fear. At this the King was still more delighted, and he shouted across the desert:

"This is to my mind! Eternal darkness! Eternal night! May they never end!"

"May they never end!" repeated all the trolls at the top of their voices. Then arose a dispute amongst the animals. All the beasts of prey agreed with the trolls, but the reindeer and other gentle creatures felt that they should like to have summer back again, although they disliked the gnats that would certainly return with it. One creature alone was ready to welcome summer quite unreservedly. This was the reindeer-flea. She piped out as loudly as she could:

"If you please, your Majesty, have we not come here to worship the sun, and to watch for his coming?"

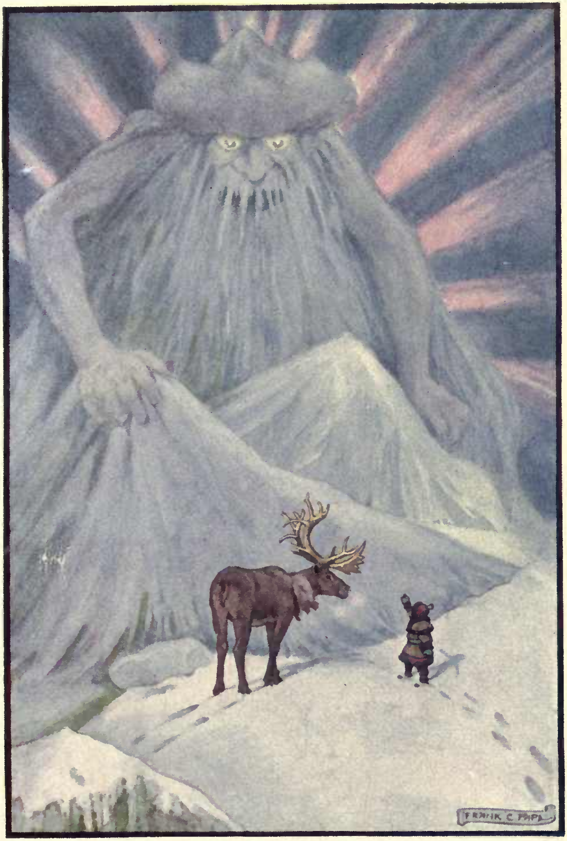
"Nonsense!" growled a polar bear. "Our meeting here springs from a stupid old custom. The sooner it ends the better! In my opinion, the sun has set for ever; he is dead!"

At these words the animals shuddered, but the trolls and goblins were much pleased with them, and reiterated them gaily, shaking with laughter to such an extent that their tiny caps fell off their heads. Then the King roared, in a voice of thunder:

"Yea! Dead is the sun! Now must the whole world worship me, the King of Eternal Night and Eternal Winter!"

Sampo, sitting behind the stone, was so greatly enraged by this speech that he came forth from his hiding-place, exclaiming:

"That, O King, is a lie as big as yourself! The sun


FRANK C PAPÉ

"'That, O King, is a lie as big as yourself!' exclaimed Sampo."

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is *not* dead, for only yesterday I saw his forerunner. He will be here very shortly, bringing sweet summer with him, and thawing the icicles in your funny, frozen beard!"

The King's brow grew black as a thunder-cloud. Forgetful of the law, he lifted his tremendous arm to strike Sampo; but at that moment the northern light faded. A red streak shot suddenly across the sky, shining with such brilliancy into the King's face that it entirely dazzled him. His arm fell useless at his side. Then the golden sun rose in slow stateliness on the horizon, and that flood of glorious light caused even those who had rejoiced in his supposed death to welcome his re-appearance.

But the goblins were considerably astonished. From under their red caps they stared at the sun with their little grey eyes, and grew so excited that they stood on their heads in the snow. The beard of the Mountain-King began to melt and drip, until it was flowing down his jacket like a running stream.

By-and-by, Sampo heard a reindeer say to her little one:

"Come, my child, we must be going, or we shall be eaten by the wolves."

"Such will be *my* fate also if I linger longer," thought Sampo. So he sprang upon the back of a beautiful reindeer with golden antlers, which started off with him at once, darting down the rocks with lightning speed.

"What is that rustling sound that I hear behind us?" asked the boy presently.

"It is made by the thousand bears; they are pursuing us in order to eat us up," replied the reindeer. "You need not fear, however, for I am the King's own enchanted reindeer, and no bear has ever been able as yet to nibble my heels!"

They went on in silence for a time, then Sampo put another question.

"What," asked he, "is that strange panting I hear behind us?"

"That," returned the reindeer, "is made by the hundred thousand wolves; they are at full gallop behind us, and wish to tear us in pieces. But fear nothing from them! No wolf has ever beaten me in a race yet!"

Again Sampo spoke:

"Is it not thundering over there amongst the rocky mountains?"

"No," answered the now trembling reindeer; "that noise is made by the King, who is chasing us. Now, indeed, all hope has fled, for no one can escape *him*!"

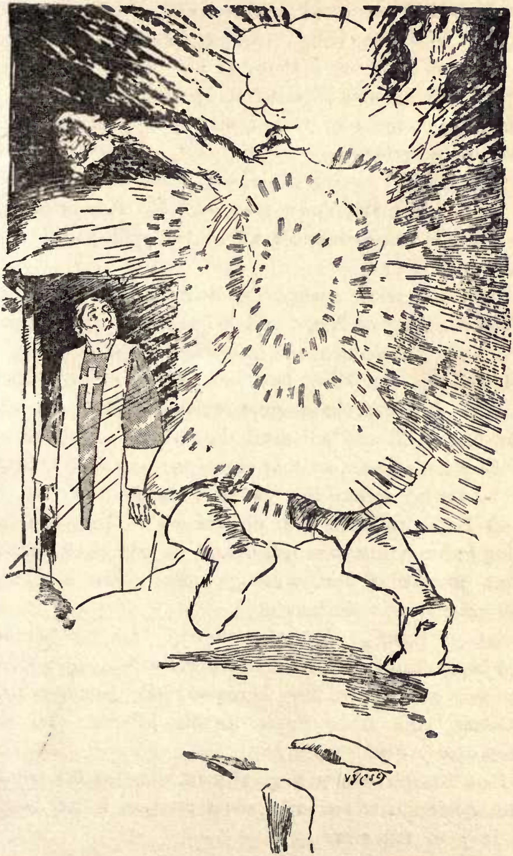
"Can we do nothing?" asked Sampo.

"There is no safety to be found here," said the reindeer, "but there is just one chance for us. We must try to reach the priest's house over yonder by Lake Enare. Once there, we shall be safe, for the King has no power over Christians."

"Oh, make haste! make haste! dear reindeer!" cried Sampo, "and you shall feed on golden oats, and out of a silver manger."

On sped the reindeer. As they entered the priest's house, the Mountain King crossed the courtyard, and knocked at the door with such violence that it is a wonder he did not knock the house down.

"Who is there?" called the priest from within.



"It is I!" answered a thundering voice; "it is the mighty Mountain King! Open the door! You have there a child, whom I claim as my prey."

"Wait a moment!" cried the priest. "Permit me to robe myself, in order that I may give your Majesty a worthier reception."

"All right!" roared the King; "but be quick about it, or I may break down your walls!" A moment later he raised his enormous foot for a kick, yelling: "Are you not ready yet?"

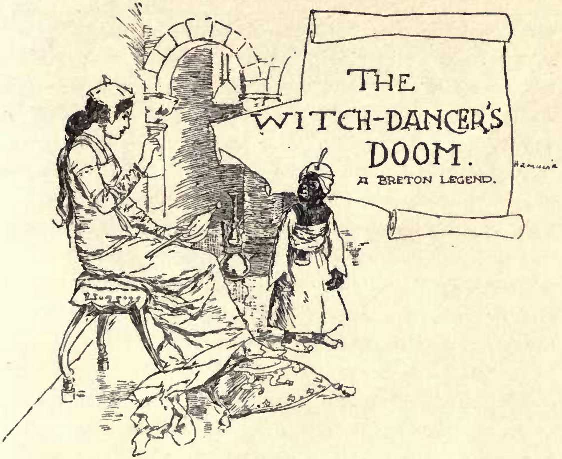
Then the priest opened the door, and said solemnly, "Begone, King of Night and Winter! Sampo Lappelill is under my protection, and he shall never be yours!"

Upon this, the King flew into such a violent passion that he exploded in a great storm of snow and wind. The flakes fell and fell, until the snow reached the roof of the priest's house, so that every one inside it expected to be buried alive. But as soon as the sun rose, the snow began to melt, and all was well. The Mountain King had completely vanished, and no one knows exactly what became of him, although some think that he is still reigning on Rastekaïs.

Sampo thanked the priest heartily for his kindness, and begged, as an additional favour, the loan of a sledge. To this sledge the boy harnessed the golden-antlered reindeer, and drove home to his parents, who were exceedingly glad to see him.

How Sampo became a great man, who fed his reindeer with golden oats out of a silver manger, is too lengthy a story to tell now.

The Witch-Dancer's Doom.



THE WITCH-DANCER'S DOOM.

A BRETON LEGEND.

I.

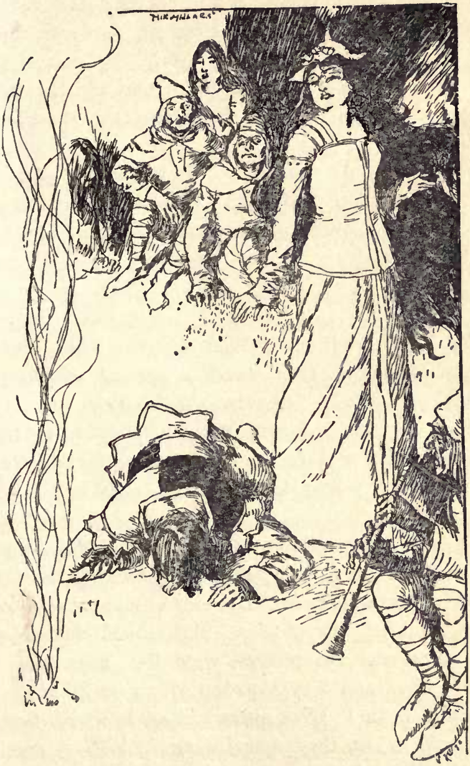
LONG, long ago, in the days of good King Arthur, Count Morriss dwelt in the old château of La Roche Morice, near Landerneau, in Brittany. With him lived his beautiful niece, Katel. Although charming in face and figure, this maiden had a somewhat uncanny reputation. For it was said—and with reason—that she was a witch.

The Count had often urged Katel to marry, but in vain. The lady had no mind to lose her freedom. Dancing was the one passion of her life. "When," said she, "I can find a knight who shall be able to dance continuously with me for twelve hours, with no break, to him I promise to give my hand!"

This scornful challenge was proclaimed by heralds in every neighbouring town and hamlet. In response came many wooers to attempt the impossible task. Those whom Katel favoured she made her partners at the rustic fêtes and open-air dances which were then in vogue. In the soft-swarded meadows, by sunlight or starlight, the dancers would meet, and, to the dreamy music of the pipes, eager couples would whirl until the hills around began to blush in the light of the early dawn. The wildest, giddiest, yet most graceful of the throng was Katel, who danced madly on until one by one her partners sank fainting upon the ground, and death released them from the heartless sorceress who had lured them into her toils.

Thus perished many suitors, until the cruel maiden became an object of general hatred and horror. When her doings came to the ears of the Count, he sternly forbade her to attend any more of the dances. In order to enforce her obedience, he shut her up in a tower, where, said he, she was to remain until she should choose a husband from among such suitors as still persisted in offering her marriage.

Now, Katel had a wizened little page, no bigger than a leveret, and as black as a raven's wing. This creature she summoned to her one morning before dawn, and, with her finger at her lips, she said to him: "Be swift and silent! My uncle still slumbers. Get thee gone by the ladder, and hie thee to the castle of Salaün, who is waiting for a message from her he loves. The guards will allow thee to pass; take horse, ride like the wind, and tell Salaün that Katel calls him to deliver her from this tower before the day dawns."



"KATEL TURNED COLDLY AWAY" (*p.* 57).

The infatuated young knight obeyed the summons immediately. In an hour's time he was assisting the lady to mount his horse, after having got her in safety down the rope-ladder. As, from the window of the donjon, the dwarf watched them ride away, he chuckled to himself:

"Ha! ha! And so they are off to the great ball held to-day in the Martyrs' Meadow! Ah, my dear Salaün! before another sun shall rise your death-knell will be tolled!"

II.

WHEN Katel and her gallant cavalier arrived at the Martyrs' Meadow, they excited general surprise and admiration. Some, however, shook their heads forebodingly, as they heard that Salaün, now Katel's affianced lover, was to be her partner, for they knew that the brave young knight must needs fall a victim to her spell.

The ball began. Some of the most skilful pipers in the land had been engaged for the occasion, and they played gavottes, rondes, courantes, and many other dances, without intermission. But Katel waited until night came and the torches were lit. Then she took Salaün's hand and they began to dance together.

"Round again! Once more! Ha! ha!" laughed the witch-maiden, as they spun along. "What! are you tired already? Do you give in so soon as this?"

"Never—while I am with *you*!" was the fervent reply. The fatal spell had begun to work.

Thus on they whirled, yet more swiftly than before, so that the other dancers stood aside to watch them. After a time, however, Katel observed that her partner was gradually becoming weaker, and that he would soon be unable to keep pace with her.

"Courage!" exclaimed she, in a a bantering tone. "We cannot stop yet; it wants but a very short time to midnight, and then I shall be yours!"

Salaün, although almost exhausted, strained every nerve and muscle in a frantic, final effort to continue the dance. Round the field they flew, at lightning speed; but it was for the last time. The knight's knees shook —his breath came more quickly—then with difficulty he gasped out the words:

"Oh, Katel! have mercy! I can do no more! Katel, my love, have I not won you yet?"

But as he sank lifeless upon the grass Katel turned coldly away. His fate was nothing to her. At that moment the clock in a neighbouring tower struck twelve. All the lights flickered and expired; darkness reigned supreme. And through the darkness, shrilling high above every other sound, rang the mocking laugh of the impish dwarf.

III.

"WHAT!" exclaimed Katel derisively, glancing angrily at the worn-out pipers, who had at last paused in their wild music, "exhausted already by such slight exertions? I wish the Evil One would send me some musicians and dancers worthy of me! Of what use are these miserable, puny creatures?"

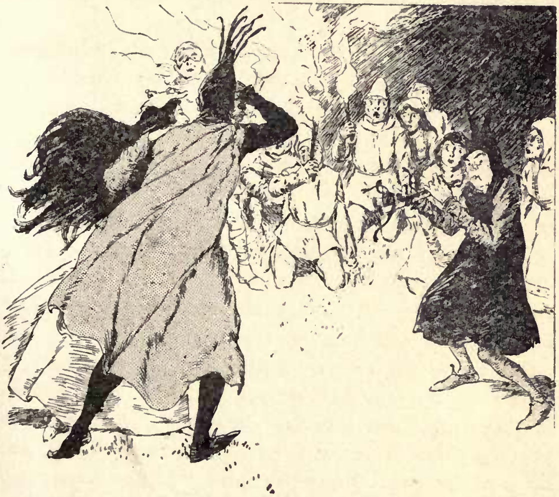
As she uttered the words, stamping her foot in her fury, a weird, red light gleamed in the sky; there was a terrible peal of thunder, and a strange stir in the trees. Then suddenly, in the centre of the field, appeared two phantom forms, at the sight of whom the panic-stricken by-standers would fain have fled. To their horror, however, they found flight impossible; they were rooted to the spot!

One of the phantoms was attired in a red garment, covered with a black cloak. Beneath his arm he held a large double pipe, coiled around which were five hissing, writhing serpents. The other stranger, who was exceedingly tall, was dressed in a tightly fitting black suit, and heavy, red mantle, while upon his head waved an imposing tuft of vultures' plumes.

The ghostly piper began at once to play an unearthly dance-tune, so wild and maddening that it made all the hearers tremble. His tall, grim companion seized Katel by the waist, and the couple whirled round to the mad measure, which grew ever faster and more furious. In an instant the torches were relit. A few others joined in the dance; not for long, however. Katel and her phantom were soon the only dancers. Shriller still shrieked the pipes, faster yet grew the music, more and more swiftly spun the feet. Ere long the witch-maiden felt that her strength was deserting her; the torches swam before her eyes, and, in the last extremity of terror, she struggled to release herself from the iron grip which held her so relentlessly.

"What! so soon tired?" cried the spectre, jeering at her. "Do you give in so soon as this? Come! round once more! Ha! ha!"

Thus was Katel treated as she had treated others. She had no breath left wherewith to answer; her last hour had come. She made one more wild, despairing bound, then fell to the ground in the throes of death. At the same moment, the phantoms vanished. There was a vivid lightning-blaze, a terrific crash of thunder; then fell black darkness hiding everything. A tempestuous wind arose, and rain fell in torrents.



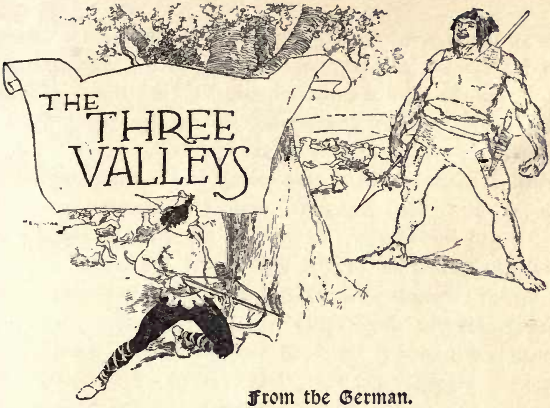
"THE COUPLE WHIRLED ROUND TO THE MAD MEASURE" (*p.* 58).

When the storm had cleared, and the morning sun shone out, those who found courage to visit the spot beheld the forms of Katel and her lover Salaün lying dead upon the shrivelled turf.

Ever since that time, the spot has been shunned by all, and still, by their firesides on the winter nights, the peasants tell the tale of Katel, the witch-dancer, and her fearful fate.

The Three Valleys.

THE THREE VALLEYS



From the German.

IN olden days there lived a Count, who had many castles and estates, and a most beautiful daughter, but no one would associate with him, for it was rumoured he was in league with the Evil One; indeed, from time to time one or other of his servants most mysteriously disappeared.

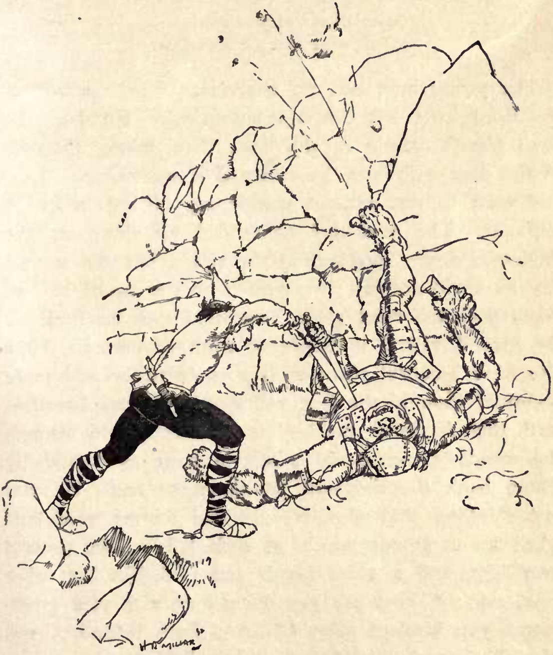
The last who disappeared was the shepherd. One evening he did not return to the castle. Search was made for him throughout the village, but in vain; no trace of him could be found. After this no one would enter the Count's service as shepherd; but at last, a bold, handsome youth presented himself; he had travelled far as a soldier, and cared nothing for evil spirits. The Count immediately engaged him, and said he could take the sheep to feed wherever he liked, only he must never go into the three valleys to the east of the castle. For a time all went well; the young man drove the sheep into the rich meadows around the castle as his master had ordered, and led a very comfortable life. But he was always thinking of the three valleys, and being a brave youth who did not fear evil spirits, he one day took the crossbow and bolts he had used when soldiering, put a new string to his bow, and said, as he struck his rusty spear against the ground:

"I will see who will venture to harm me in the three valleys; it will fare badly with him, I think."

Going towards the east, he soon arrived with his sheep in the first valley, where he found beautiful meadows in which he could safely leave his flock. He looked carefully around, but, except the butterflies fluttering to and fro, and the humming of the bees, there was neither sound nor movement. Then he sat down beneath an oak and began to play on his pipe; suddenly, in the wood near, arose a crashing and cracking as if some mighty animal were breaking through the bushes, and, before our shepherd could fix a bolt in his cross-bow, a powerful giant stood before him and cried:

"What are you doing here with your grass-eaters, destroying my meadows, you insolent fellow? You shall answer for this."

He did not wait for an answer, but threw his spear with fearful force at the shepherd, who saved himself by springing behind the oak, into which the spear sank so deep that the point stuck out on the other side. Then, fixing a bolt into his cross-bow, the shepherd took aim, and struck the giant so skilfully in the centre of the forehead that he fell with a deep groan to the earth. Before he had time to rise, the shepherd bounded forward and ran his spear through his adversary's neck, nailing him to the ground, and his spirit soon fled.



"A WELL-DIRECTED THRUST SOON QUIETED HIM" (*p.* 67).

The shepherd took the giant's sword and armour, and was about to return home, when in an opening of the forest he saw a stately castle. The doors were wide open; he entered. In the spacious hall stood a stone table on which was a cup covered with a silver plate bearing these words :—

Who drinks of this cup
Shall overcome the Evil One.

The young man had no confidence in the words or the drink, and left the cup untouched. He laid the dead giant's armour in the hall ; then, taking the key of the door with him, he returned home with his flock, and went to rest without mentioning his adventure to any one. The next day he tended his sheep on the mountain slopes surrounding the castle, but the second day he could not rest ; so, girding on the sword he had taken from the dead giant, he started with his flock for the second valley, in hopes of fresh adventure. Here also were beautiful pastures, if possible richer and more luxuriant than in the first valley ; the flowers breathed forth their fragrance, the birds sang sweetly, and through the meadows meandered a stream clear as crystal, by whose bank the shepherd lay down to rest. He was just thinking that all adventure and danger were past when an enormous block of rock fell on the ground near him, and a voice rough and wild, like that of a bear, said : " What are you doing here with your grass-eaters, you insolent fellow ? " And from behind a wall of rock stepped a mighty giant, brandishing a ponderous stone club. He aimed a blow at the shepherd, who ducked behind the rock which the giant had thrown as his first greeting, and the club descending on the stone, it broke in pieces from the force of the blow.

Quick as lightning the youth drew his sword, and with one stroke cut through the sinews in the bend of the giant's knee, who fell to the earth with a loud roar. He struck out wildly with his fists, but a well-directed thrust through the heart soon quieted him. The shepherd left him lying there, and turned towards the wall of rock; here he found a massive door concealed amongst the thicket. Through this he passed, and entered a hall-like cavern, in which, at a stone manger, stood a snow-white horse ready saddled, and over the manger was engraved this saying:—

Who springs on this white horse
Shall overcome the Evil One.

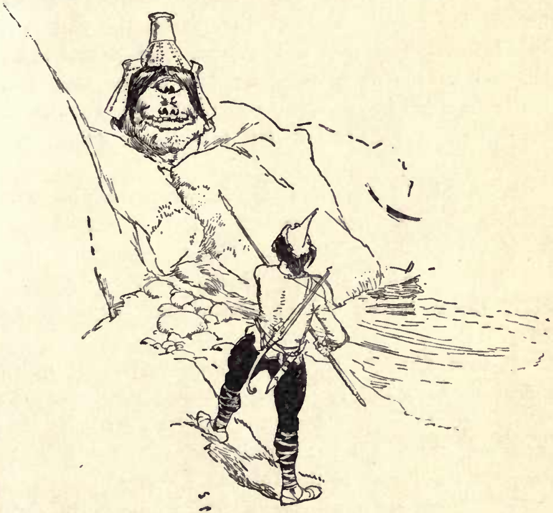
Now, the shepherd thought: "I am strong enough to take care of myself, and I do not want to overcome the Evil One, he has always left me in peace; but I will remember that here stands a fine horse on which I can ride forth into the wide world." He threw fresh oats into the manger, shut the door, and returned home. The next few days he remained very quiet, lest his movements might have been observed; then, as no one questioned him, he one fine morning drove his sheep into the third valley. Beautiful meadows glittered in the sunshine; from a hill of rock a waterfall plashed down, forming a small sea in which sported innumerable fish. The shepherd looked carefully around, searched under every bush, but found nothing. No sound was heard save the continued plash, plash, of the cool water. The day was very sultry, and the shepherd was just preparing for a bathe in the fresh, clear water, when from out a ravine near the sea appeared a horrible human head, with one eye, as large as a plate, in the centre of the forehead, and a voice loud as the roll of thunder shouted: "What do you want here, you insolent earth-worm?"

The head rose higher and higher, until a giant as high as a tower stood before the shepherd, who with a sure aim sent his lance into the eye of his adversary. The monster, thus blinded, groped wildly about with his hands, in hopes to strangle his enemy, but he only seized an oak, which he tore up by the roots and threw it high into the air. Now the victory was easy, for though the giant could no longer be hurt by cuts and thrusts, which slipped off from his body as from a mossy stone, the shepherd soon found other means. He mocked and insulted the blind giant, and by the sound of his voice drew him ever nearer and nearer to the sea, at the side where the cliff overhung the water. At last he sprang for a moment on the edge of the precipice, and gave a loud, mocking cry, then silently concealed himself behind a tree. The giant, deceived by the shout, pursued him eagerly, lost his footing, and fell heavily into the sea.

Then the shepherd went down into the ravine from which the monster had appeared. Here lay a meadow full of beautiful flowers, in the midst of which rose a spacious mansion, built of the trunks of trees. The shepherd entered the hall and saw a mighty spear, on whose shaft these words were cut:—

Who throws this lance
Shall overcome the Evil One.

He seized the spear, but his arms were too weak to raise it, and he wearily laid the mighty weapon back in the corner; at the same time he thought, since he had conquered three giants, he could surely overcome the Evil One without this lance. As the day drew to a close he gathered his sheep together and returned to



"'WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE?'" (*p.* 68).

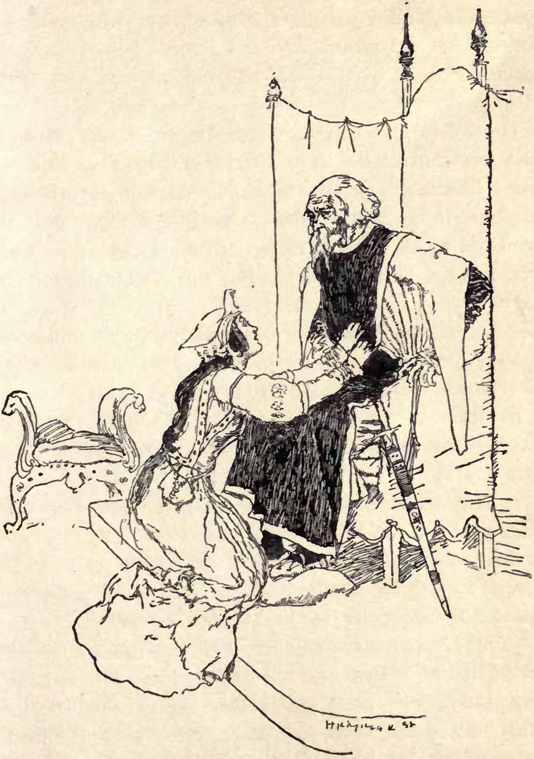
the castle. Arrived there, he was immediately summoned before the Count, who asked him angrily where he had been. The shepherd then truthfully related all that had happened in the three valleys, and how he had that day slain the giant as tall as a tower.

"Woe to you and to me," replied the Count, with pale lips. "I heard the giants' cries of rage, and hoped you were paying for your disobedience with your life. But it has happened otherwise, and now I and my daughter must suffer because you, you insolent fellow, disobeyed my commands and entered the giants' territories; for it has been made known to me that to-morrow the mighty lord of the giants, the Prince of the Infernal Regions, will appear, and demand my daughter or me as a sacrifice; but before that you, you miserable fellow, shall suffer all the agonies of torture, as a punishment for bringing me into this trouble.

"Seize him!" he cried to the servants who were standing in the entrance-hall. His command was at once obeyed, when the Count's daughter, who had listened with glowing cheeks to the shepherd's story, threw herself on her knees and implored for delay.

"Dearest father," she cried, "should you not rather endeavour to make use of this brave youth for our deliverance than put him to the torture? He has overcome three giants; surely he will be able to vanquish the Prince of the Infernal Regions."

The Count remained for a few moments in deep thought, and then acknowledged that his daughter's suggestion was both good and clever. He asked the shepherd if he were willing to expiate his crime by a combat with the Evil One, and the young man, with a grateful look at his deliverer, at once agreed. With the first dawn of morning he rose from his couch, for he now recalled the words about overcoming the Evil



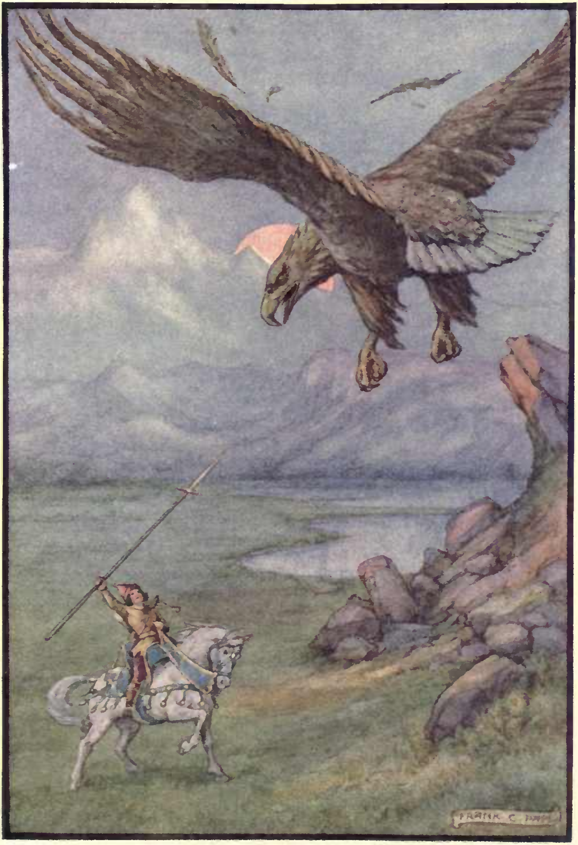
"SHE IMPLORED FOR DELAY" (*p.* 70).

One, and hastened to the first valley, where in the castle stood the cup with the inscription :—

Who drinks of this cup
Shall overcome the Evil One.

He seized the cup and emptied it at one draught, and—wonderful—the magic draught flowed through his veins like fire, and he felt courage and strength enough to combat a whole army. With sparkling eyes he hastened to the second valley, mounted the white horse, who greeted him with a joyful neigh, and then galloped as if in flight to the third valley, in which stood the mighty lance. Yesterday he could scarcely move it; to-day, with one hand, he swung it high over his head, as if it had been a small arrow.

By sunrise he was again at the Count's castle, waiting eagerly for what would happen, but the day passed and no one appeared. The sun had sunk to rest, and the moon had just risen in all her splendour, when in the north of the heavens was seen what appeared to be a dark storm-cloud. With the speed of lightning it approached the castle, and a voice, as of a bassoon, sounded from out the cloud : "Where are my propitiatory sacrifices?" At the same time a gigantic eagle, with greenish-grey wings, like the storm-cloud, hovered high over the castle, ready to swoop down on his prey. Then the young man set spurs into his white horse, and shaking his lance high above his head, cried with a loud voice : "There are no sacrifices here for you, you robber! Begone instantly, or you shall feel my arrows!" On hearing these words, the eagle swooped


FRANK C. PAPE

"The eagle swooped down with a wild cry."

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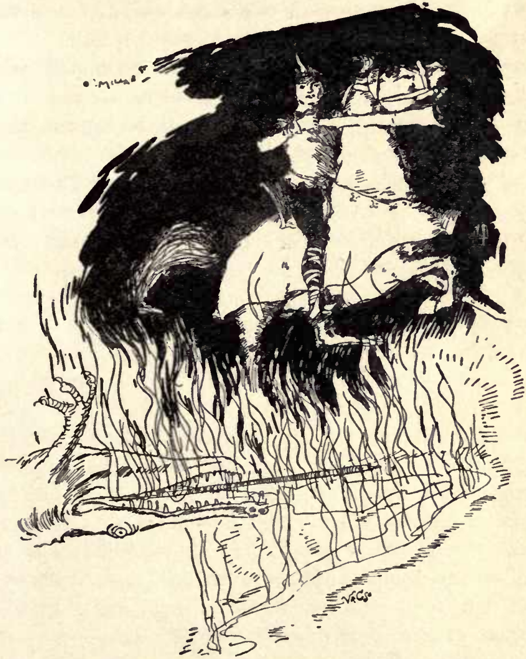
down with a wild cry, before the shepherd could take his cross-bow, and the young man would certainly have perished had it not been for his presence of mind and the strength and activity of his steed. A touch with the spur, and it flew swift as the wind under a very old and thickly leaved linden tree, whose branches hung down almost to the ground, so that the eagle could only break in through the side.

This the bird at once attempted, and it caused his death, for his outspread wings became entangled in the branches, and the brave rider, with one powerful blow of his sword, severed the head from the body. But, oh, horror! instead of blood there came forth from the headless body of the eagle a huge serpent, who, with wide-open jaws, approached the shepherd and tried to enfold him in the rings of its flexible body. By a skilful movement, it encircled the horse and rider, and crushed them until the young man thought he should be forced into the body of his steed; but the horse pressed himself so close against the tree that the head of the serpent came round on the other side of the trunk, and thus it was hindered from harming the shepherd with its poisonous bite or breath. One stroke of the shepherd's sharp dagger, and the body of the serpent fell in two pieces to the ground; the horse immediately trampled on the head. But the hinder part of the serpent swelled and swelled, the cut became a frightful mouth, which spurted out smoke and flames, while from the rings of the serpent's body grew forth claws and wings, and at last a horrible monster in the form of a dragon threw itself on the shepherd, whose strength had already begun to fail through the dreadful pressing of the serpent. But in his greatest need a saving thought occurred to him—he turned his horse round: it broke through the branches of the linden tree into the open field, and sped with its rider to the nearest stream, in whose waters they both cooled themselves. The dragon snorted after them, spitting forth fire and smoke. But as the head of the serpent, from whose body the dragon had grown, had been destroyed, there was no deadly poison in its breath, and the rider was safe from the flames through bathing in the stream. So he rode boldly towards the approaching dragon with lance in rest, and tried to approach it from the side; but all his blows glanced off from its scaly body as from a coat of mail. Suddenly it occurred to him to thrust his lance down the monster's throat. He turned his horse and spurred him straight towards the dragon, and thrusting his lance through the smoke and flame, stuck it right into the creature's throat. He was obliged to leave his lance, for his horse, singed by the fiery breath of the dragon, bounded far to one side; but the monster did not attempt to follow them, the lance had stuck deep into its body. It struck wildly with its tail on the ground, until the earth burst, then it shivered and fell over, first on its side, then on its back, a stream of fire poured forth from its wide-open jaws, and with the flames its life passed away.

Thus was the combat ended and the Evil One subdued. Joyfully the shepherd rode back to the Count and his daughter, and told them all that had happened. The Count, embracing him, said: "You are our deliverer, to you I owe my life and all that I possess: take the half of whatever is mine, or choose from it whatever pleases you."



"WITH THE FLAMES ITS LIFE PASSED AWAY" (*p.* 74).

The shepherd gazed earnestly into the eyes of the Count's lovely daughter, and replied:

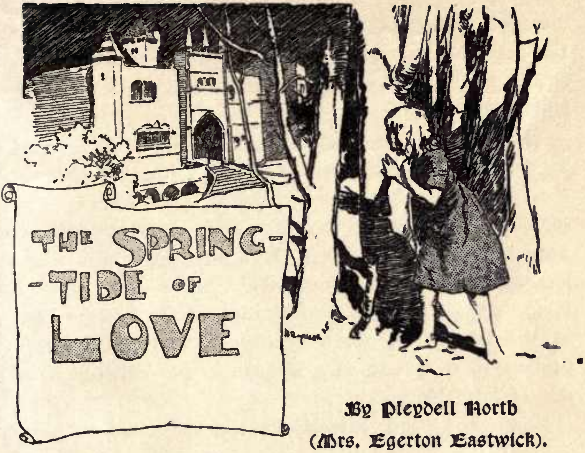
"I know of nothing, Sir Count, in the whole world which is dearer to me than your daughter. Give her to me for my wife, if she be willing."

The Count smiled. "Are you willing, my child?"

"I love him more than words can express," said the maiden, and sank on the breast of the shepherd.

The next day the marriage was celebrated with great splendour, and when Heaven had blessed their union with children, and these were grown up, the hero of this story, a shepherd no longer, used to say to his sons when telling them of his adventures: "There are three things by which one can subdue giants and evil spirits, and become great: courage, perseverance, and presence of mind."

The Springtide of Love.



THE SPRING-TIDE OF LOVE

By Pleydell North (Mrs. Egerton Eastwick).

THE mists of the early twilight were falling, and Elsa, the little girl who lived at the woodman's cottage, was still far from home. She had wandered out in the spring sunshine in search of the bluebells and wild anemones with which the wood abounded, for the child loved the company of the birds and flowers better than the rough play of the boys who were called her brothers.

The woodman and his wife said she was strange and dreamy, full of curious fancies which they found it hard to understand; but, then, they were not Elsa's real parents, which might account for their difficulty. They were kind to her, however, in their fashion, and Elsa always tried to remember to obey them; but sometimes she forgot. She had forgotten to-day—for although the good wife had told her to remain near the cottage, the eagerness of her search for the flowers she loved had led her farther into the wood than she had ever been before.

The sunlight disappeared, and the darkness seemed to come quite suddenly under the thick branches of the trees; the birds had chanted their last evening song and gone to their nests—only a solitary thrush sang loudly just overhead; Elsa thought it was warning her to hurry homewards. She turned quickly, taking as she thought the direction of the cottage; but as she was barely seven years old, and felt a little frightened, it is not surprising that she only plunged deeper into the wood.

Now she found herself in the midst of a great silence; the beautiful tracery of young green leaves through which she had hitherto caught glimpses of the sky had disappeared, and over her head stretched only bare brown branches, between which she saw the shining stars, clear as on a frosty winter's night. The stars looked friendly, and she was glad to see them, but it was growing dreadfully cold. The plucked flowers withered and fell from her poor little numbed hands, and she shivered in her thin cotton frock.

Ah! what would she not have given for a sight of the open door and the fire in the woodman's cottage, and a basin of warm bread and milk, even though it was given with a scolding from the woodman's wife! She struggled on, with her poor little tired feet, for it seemed to her that the wood was growing thinner—perhaps there might be a house hereabouts.

But, oh! how terribly cold. Now there was frost upon the ground at her feet, frost upon dead leaves and blades of grass, frost upon the bare tree branches. The moon had risen, and she could see that all the world around her was white and chill and dead. Surely she had wandered back into the cruel bitter winter, frost-bound and hard.

It was strange that she had strength to go on, but she looked up at the stars, and thought that they were guiding her. At length she came to the border of the wood, and there stretched before her a wide, open space, with only a few trees scattered here and there, and through an opening of the trees the cold moon shone down upon a white, silent house.

The house looked as dead and winter-bound as everything else; but still it *was* a house, and Elsa said to herself that surely some one must live in it. So she thanked the friendly stars for leading her aright, and with what remaining strength she had, dragged her poor little numbed feet up the broad path or road between the trees. At the end of the road an iron gate hung open upon its hinges, and Elsa found herself in what once had been a garden. Now the lawns and flower-beds were all alike one blinding sheet of ice and frozen snow.

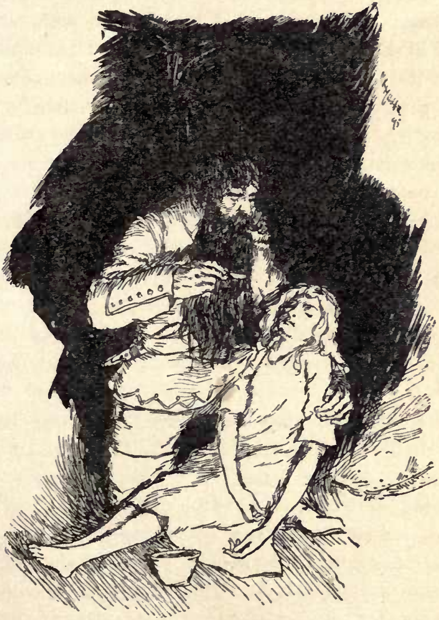
But, oh, joy! there was the great white house, and from one window shone a light, surely the light of a fire. All the rest was dark. Up a flight of stone steps the child dragged her weary feet, across a terrace that had surely once been gay with flowers, until she stood before a huge door, brown and black, except where the frost gleamed, closed and barred with iron bars. The great knocker hung high above her reach; but with her poor little hands she beat against the woodwork. Surely, if some one did not let her in soon, she must fall down there and sleep and die upon the step. But at the sound of her faint knocking there came from within the deep baying of a hound, and Elsa was terrified anew, but could not run away; then in a few moments a heavy bar seemed to be withdrawn and the great door opened slowly.

A tall man stood within—a man in the dress of a hunter, pale-faced in the moonlight, but strong and powerful, and wearing a long, dark beard that reached almost to his waist. His was a figure to fill any child with fear, but Elsa saw only the scene behind him. A great blazing wood fire upon an open hearth, with rugs in front of it upon which were stretched two large hounds; a third, shaking himself slowly, had followed his master to the door. Elsa stretched out her little hands to the blazing warmth, with the cry of a perishing child.

"Take me in—oh! take me in!" she pleaded. "Please let me come in!"

She ran forward. Then with a strange hoarse sound, that she did not understand, the man stooped and lifted her in his arms, and carried her forward and laid her gently down upon the rugs in the grateful warmth, and the hounds sniffed round her and seemed well pleased, and ready to welcome her—and— for a little while she remembered no more.

When Elsa came to herself (she thought she must have been asleep, but the waking was a little strange and difficult) she found that she was propped up among soft cushions still upon the rugs; the dogs now lay at a respectful distance, each with his forepaws stretched out and his nose held between them, while with gleaming eyes he watched with keenest interest all that going was on.



"HER NEW FRIEND WAS OBLIGED TO FEED HER" (*p.* 84).

The rough-looking man with the long, dark beard and the pale face knelt beside her, holding a basin of warm, steaming broth. Then Elsa sat up and tried to drink, but she was so weak with fatigue and cold that her new friend was obliged to feed her with a spoon, which he did rather awkwardly. After she had swallowed the broth, the warm blood flowed once more freely through her veins, and she sank into a deep, sweet sleep, her little head falling serenely against the stranger's breast and her hair spreading out in golden waves over the arm that held her.

When Elsa once more opened her eyes, the cold grey light of morning fell through the uncurtained windows into the hall. She found herself lying on a couch covered with rugs of warm fur, at the side of the hearth, where logs of pine wood, newly kindled, leapt and blazed, filling the air with sweet, pungent odours.

For a while she was bewildered, wondering how she came to be there, instead of in her little room at the woodman's cottage. Then she saw her friend of the night before kneeling in front of the fire, evidently preparing food, while the dogs, grouped around, sat on their haunches with ears erect, keen and observant, watching his movements. Then Elsa remembered; and she clapped her hands with a merry laugh, the laugh of a happy, waking child. The man kneeling by the fire started at the sound, and then turned his grave face towards her with a wistful expression strange to see.

"I want to get up," said Elsa promptly. "If you please, I can wash and dress myself; I've been taught how."

"Wait a few minutes, little lady, then you shall have all you want."

The voice sounded strangely, and the man seemed listening to its tones as though surprised to hear himself speak. But the rough, halting accents seemed less out of keeping with the old house than Elsa's laugh. The dogs came and licked her hands, and she played with them until the man rose from his place before the fire, and lifting her up bade her come with him.

He led her to a small room off the hall, which was indeed curious in its arrangements. A toilet-table stood there with most costly fittings; brushes with silver and ivory handles were lying upon the faded silk; a little pair of satin shoes had been thrown carelessly upon the floor; a cloak of crimson satin was flung over a chair. All these things looked as though a hand had cast them aside but yesterday—yet all were faded and soiled, and the dust lay thick as though that yesterday had been many years ago.

And among these relics of an unknown past the child made her simple toilet. She had never seen such magnificence, or felt, she thought, so sad. But when she returned to the hall ten minutes later, the sadness was forgotten.

She looked a quaint little figure, indeed, clad in a silken wrapper provided by her host, which trailed far behind on the ground, greatly to her delight; her little feet were cased in dainty slippers which, small as they were, yet were many sizes too large. In spite of misfits, however, she contrived to walk with a stately grandeur quite amazing to behold, until the dogs jumped and fawned upon her, when she forgot her finery in a game of play and lost her slippers in the rug.

On the table, a breakfast was rudely spread: cold meats for the master of the house, who fed his dogs from his own plate, while for Elsa was provided a bowl of goat's milk and some crisp cakes, which she thought delicious.

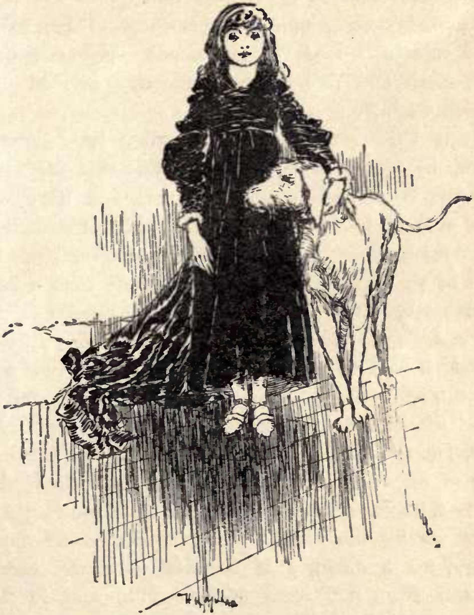
When the meal was over, Elsa pleaded to be allowed to do for her new friend the household duties she had been taught to fulfil by the woodman's wife; and soon, with the wrapper deftly pinned about her waist, and the silken sleeves tucked up from bare and dimpled arms, she stood before a bowl of steaming water, washing plates and dishes. Only the table was rather high, and she was forced to stand upon a stool.

From that day a strange new life began for little Elsa.

The rough-looking man who had given her shelter seemed to be living quite alone with his dogs. Every morning he went out with them and his gun, apparently to hunt and shoot in the forest, for he usually returned laden with game, which served to keep the larder stocked.

Of other kinds of provisions there seemed to be a plentiful supply on the premises; the granaries were well stocked with corn, which the master ground himself, while some goats tethered in the outhouses gave a sufficient quantity of milk for the daily needs of the little household.

Of Elsa's return to the woodman's cottage there seemed to be no question. She was terrified at the thought of being again lost in the wood, and pleaded hard to remain with her new friend, who, on his side, was equally loth to part with her.



"SHE LOOKED A QUAINT LITTLE FIGURE" (*p.* 85).

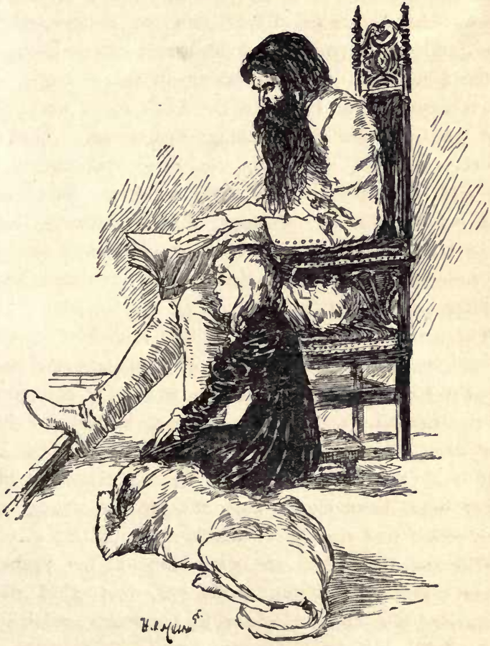
Soon, having learned many useful ways from the woodman's wife, she became a clever little housekeeper, and could make a good stew, while Ulric, as the master of the house bade her call him, was out with his dogs in the forest, though now only two of the hounds accompanied him in his expeditions ; one was always left as Elsa's companion and guardian. Then, too, she could milk and feed the goats, and keep the house-place clean and tidy. But all the day was not given to such work as this.

When Ulric had returned, and they had dined together, he would bring the great carved wooden chair with the huge back up to the fire, and Elsa would fetch a stool to his side and busy herself with needle and thread, while he told her strange stories ; or sometimes he would fetch a ponderous volume from a library the house contained and read, either to himself or aloud to her, such things as she could understand.

Now, if you wonder where Elsa found the needle and thread which I have mentioned, I must tell you that Ulric had given her a little work-basket neatly fitted, but the silk lining of which was much faded, and some of the needles were rusty. There was in it also a golden thimble, which Elsa found a little too large.

And as for the clothes she worked at, one day he brought her a quantity of beautiful garments, some of silk and satin, and some of fine cloth, and in these, having nothing of her own but her one poor little cotton frock, the child managed to dress herself, till she looked like a quaint little fairy princess. Her stitches were awkward and badly done at first, but as time went on, instinct helped her small knowledge, and she grew handy with her needle.

When she was cooking and feeding the goats, she wore a woollen petticoat and an apron, a costume more suited to the occasion.



"HE WOULD READ ALOUD TO HER" (*p.* 88).

In the evenings Ulric taught her many things: to read and to write, and even to speak in strange languages, so that her education was by no means neglected. He let her wander over the great mansion where she would, and showed her many of the rooms himself. All bore signs of having been used quite recently, and yet a long time ago. Dust was thick everywhere, and soon Elsa grew to understand that the dust must remain and accumulate; no hand was to be allowed to touch anything in that strange, silent house beyond the hall and the little room which Ulric had arranged for her sleeping apartment. One part of the mansion, however, she never penetrated. At the end of a long passage hung a heavy velvet curtain, and behind this was a door, always securely locked. Only Ulric passed beyond it, at stated times, and when he returned from these visits he was more than usually sad for many hours.

The weeks slipped into months, and Elsa dwelt on in this strange home. Every day at first she looked eagerly for the breaking of the frost—for the promise of the sunshine and flowers she had left behind her in the wood. But the spring never came. The bitter cold and the frost continued, and in time the child's heart must have frozen too, but for the strong, warm love which had sprung up within it for Ulric.

Old and thoughtful she grew, beyond her years, but never unhappy. Ulric needed her, was glad of her presence; she could minister to his wants and brighten his sad life.

So Ulric's love grew more to her than the flowers and sunshine of the outer world; to think of leaving him now would break her heart, but she wondered often over the mystery that shadowed his life and hers.

And the months grew to years, and Elsa was twelve years old.

Then one evening Ulric came in from one of his visits to the closed chamber, more sad and thoughtful even than usual, and taking Elsa's hand in his, bade her sit beside him for a little while and put aside her work. She came obediently, looking anxiously into his face.

"Little Elsa," he said, "I have counted the time, and it is now five years since you came to me. You told me then you were seven years old, now you are therefore twelve, and will soon be growing into a maiden. The time has come——"

Instinctively the child clasped his hand closer.

"Not to part us, father?" (for so she had learned to call him.)

"That, my child, must rest with you."

"Then it is soon settled," said Elsa, trying to laugh, "for I will never leave you."

Something like the light of hope shone in the man's clouded eyes—eyes in which Elsa had never seen a smile, although his lips had smiled at her often.

"Listen," he said; "before you speak rash words, I must tell you all. Then you shall decide.

"It is a little more than eleven years since the curse fell upon me. I was a hard man then, Elsa—hard and cruel and strong—it was my boast that I never forgave a debt, or pardoned an enemy.

"I had married a young and beautiful wife, and her I loved passionately, but in my own hard and selfish fashion. Often I refused to heed even her gentle pleadings for the suffering, the sinful, and the poor. And we had one child—a girl—then only a few months old.

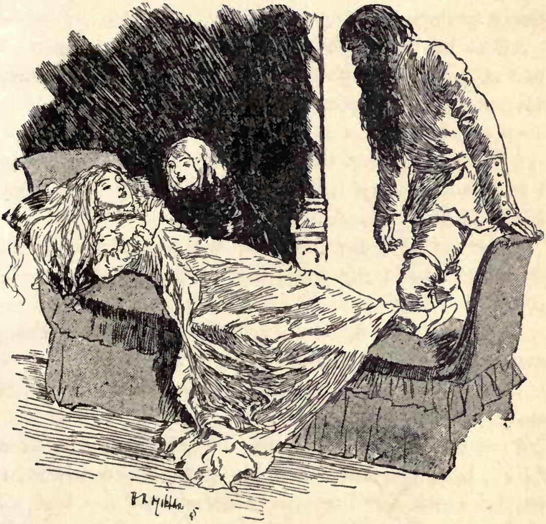
"It was a New Year's Eve that I decided upon giving a great entertainment to all the country round. I did it for my own glorification. Among the rich I was disliked, but tolerated on account of my position; by the poor far and wide I was feared and hated.

"Every one invited came to my ball. My wife looked exquisitely lovely, more lovely I thought than on our bridal day—everything ministered to my pride and satisfaction.

"We had mustered here, here in this hall, to drink the health of the dying year and welcome the incoming of the new, when above the sounds of laughter and good cheer was heard from without a pitiful, feeble wail—the wail of a child in pain. That feeble cry rang then above every other sound—it rings in my heart still.

"Before I could interfere, my wife, with her own hands, had flung wide the great barred door, and I saw a sight which I alone could explain.

"Upon the step was huddled a woman, with a child in her arms. A man, gaunt and hunger-stricken, towered behind her in the darkness; two other children clung to her, shivering and weeping. We were in the midst of the cruel, bitter winter; the earth was frost-bound, hard and cold, even as now. That day I had given orders that these people, poor and starving as they were, should be turned from their home. The man I had suspected of being a poacher, and he was doing no work—a good-for-nothing—but *she*, my wife, had pleaded for them that I would wait, at least, until the summer. Now she bent down to that poor creature on the step, who was striving to nurse and warm her babe in her chill arms, and whispered something—I guessed it was a promise of shelter.


"'MOTHER, AWAKE!' SHE SAID" (*p.* 95).

"In my fierce pride and anger I laid my hand upon her arm, and with a strong grip drew her back—then without a word I closed the door and barred it. But within there was no more laughter. A voice rose upon the still night air—the sound of a bitter curse—a curse that should rest upon me and mine, the chill of winter and of death, of pitiless desolation and remorse, until human love should win me back to human pity and God's forgiveness.

"One by one, with cold good-nights, my guests departed. My wife stole away to her own apartments without a word; upon her arm I saw the mark of my cruel hand.

"In the morning the curse had fallen. The woman I had turned away had been found at my gates, dead, her child still clasped to her breast.

"The servants fled and left me alone, taking with them our child; my wife—that night—she, too—died—to me."

The man's head drooped upon his hands. For a moment there was silence in the hall.

Elsa stood—her child's heart grieved at the terrible story, her whole nature sorrowing, pitiful, shocked.

Presently Ulric recovered himself and continued: "Now, Elsa, you know all. My child, if you will return to the world and leave me to work out my fate, you shall not go penniless. I have wealth. For your sake I will venture once more among the haunts of men and see you placed in a safe home, then—I will try to forget. It is right that you should shrink."

"Father, dear father, I love you—you are sorry—I will not leave you—do not send me away."

A look almost of rapture changed the worn and tear-stained face of the man who had owned his sin—and the child's arms closed once more around his neck, and her golden head nestled to his breast. A few minutes later he led her to the closed chamber. Together they passed beyond it, and Elsa found herself standing in a richly furnished room.

Near a window was a couch covered with dark velvet, and upon the couch a figure lay stretched as if in quiet, death-like sleep, or carved in marble. The figure was that of a young and very fair woman. Her dress of white satin had yellowed with time; her hands were clasped upon her breast as though in prayer; her golden hair lay unbound upon the pillow.

"It is fitting now," said Ulric, "that you should come here."

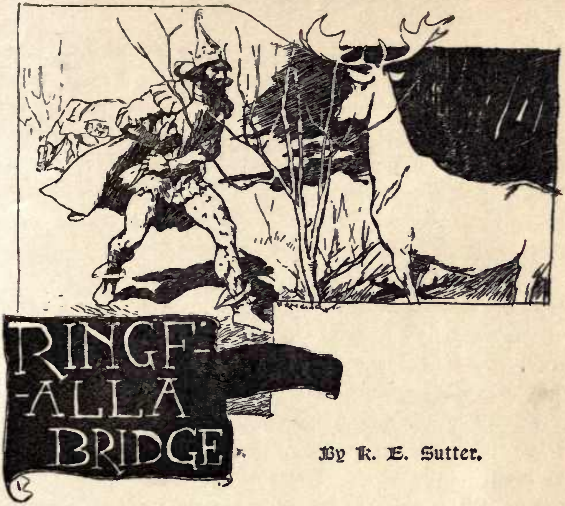
Softly Elsa advanced. She stood beside the couch, gazing down upon the still, white face, so sweet in its settled grief, but which in this long silence seemed to have lost its first youth. Elsa bent lower, lower. What new instinct filled her warm, young heart, and made her speak?

"Mother, awake!" she said. "Mother!" and kissed the cold, quiet lips.

Was it a ray of sunlight that stole through the open window and trembled upon the mouth, curving it into a smile? Slowly the dark eyes opened and rested with a look of ineffable love upon Elsa's face.

And so the curse and the shadows of eternal winter passed away from the house of Ulric, and his young bride came back from her long slumber. In due time the garden, too, awoke to the touch of spring, and the flowers bloomed, and the birds mated once more and sang in budding trees, and the sun shone. And Elsa's love bound closely together the hearts of her father and mother; for perhaps you have been clever enough to find out that the woodman's wife was the nurse who had carried away with her in her flight Ulric's little daughter on the night of the New Year's ball.

Ringfalla Bridge.



RINGFALLA BRIDGE

By K. E. Sutter.

ONCE upon a time there lived a King who had two kingdoms to govern—his own always the perfection of law and order, while the other was given over to confusion and rebellion, which, strive as he would, got ever worse instead of better.

It had been the worry of his life ever since he began to reign—and as he had no son to help him, he was obliged to find a ruler for it among his Ministers, but not one of them, however clever, could manage to control its unruly inhabitants.

Sometimes, at long intervals, he even went to live there himself, on which occasions his troubles in regard to it multiplied so exceedingly that he swore they were half demons, as the name of their kingdom, Nokkëland, proved, and for his part he wished they could find an evil spirit like themselves to govern them in his stead, as no mere mortal could. And then, as he could think of nothing else, he called a council of his most trusted chiefs, and conferred with them; but as they had all given their best consideration to the subject many times before, none of them could come to any more brilliant conclusion than formerly.

Therefore King Kaftan said he would hunt on the morrow to distract his mind, so a great party set forth at daybreak, and scoured the woods far and near, but no sport could they get; no fourfooted beast could they find excepting rabbits, and they were everywhere.

Unwilling to return empty-handed, and hoping for better luck on the morrow, the King gave the order to camp in the wood. Some of the men were catching rabbits for supper, whilst others were making fires to cook them, when just as the last rim of the sinking sun disappeared below the horizon, a beautiful hart as white as snow with antlers and hoofs of gold, suddenly appeared, and walked leisurely down the glade towards the sunset.

Instantly, with one accord, King, courtiers, huntsmen, and servants rushed off in hot pursuit, helter-skelter over each other, on foot, on horseback, armed or unarmed, just as they found themselves when it first appeared. The King, who had not dismounted, was ahead of the others, and urged his steed with whip and spur; but poor Rolf was very weary, and do as he would, his master could get no nearer to his quarry.

Night was rapidly closing in when the King found himself far ahead of his attendants, and alone with a spent horse in a part of the forest where he had never been before, and miles from any human habitation.

More and more faltering grew Rolf's jaded pace, and in proportion as it slackened, slower went the hart. The King's pulses quivered with excitement. He leapt from the saddle, drew his dagger, and prepared to follow on foot; but, to his astonishment, the beast had turned and was coming slowly towards him, the moonlight turning his antlers to silver, and gleaming on his milk-white coat.

Half instinctively, the King had raised his dagger, when the hart stopped and spoke in courteous, but authoritative tones.

"Stay thy hand and know that I also am a King in my own country. I have much to say to thee, therefore follow me and fear nothing."

So King Kaftan followed, wondering, until the hart stopped before a great rock, overhung with a tangle of eglantine and honeysuckle—and pushing aside the fragrant curtain dexterously with his horns, disclosed what appeared to be the mouth of a cave. Entering this, closely followed by the King, they proceeded for some way in almost total darkness. Gradually it grew lighter and the path wider, when the King perceived, to his amazement, that the illumination proceeded from countless numbers of bats, ridden by small imps carrying lighted glow-worms.

Presently they came to a spacious garden, where all the trees were lighted by coloured lamps hanging among the branches, and the air was filled with music and perfume.

Within the garden was a great pavilion of purple silk, most gorgeously emblazoned with scarlet and gold, and having a Royal banner floating from the roof.

Within was a table, covered with every variety of food and wine, lavishly decorated with flowers and gold plate, and laid for two. Here the hart entertained his Royal guest to supper, and after he was completely refreshed and rested, handed him an enamelled box, which, on being opened, disclosed a clay pipe, blackened with much use, a tinder, and a flint.

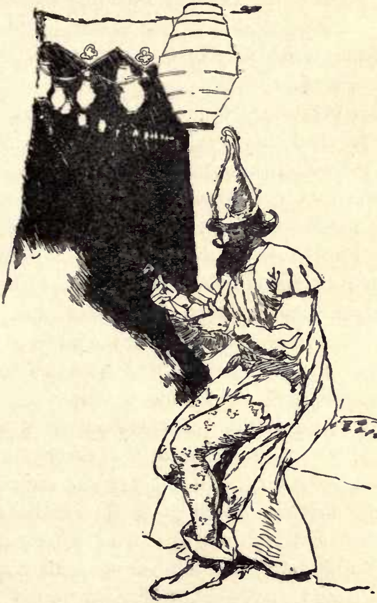
"Smoke, O King!" said the host; "unfortunately I cannot join you; and now to explain why I have lured you from your own people to my enchanted land.

"I know your difficulties in Nokkëland, because for one reason we are very near neighbours, though probably you are unaware of it. The people who inhabit that kingdom are descended from a water fiend, and the turbulent instincts inherited from him can never be quelled until the power of the Neck, who rules the river between your kingdom and theirs, is broken. Now, the Neck is my enemy as well as yours, and if you will ally yourself with me and follow my counsels, you will have peace, honour, and happiness for the rest of your life in all probability."

"I am ready," said the King, "only tell me what to do; the Klavs are the plague of my life, but from what you say success even then is by no means a certainty."

"Much depends on luck," said the hart, "and to neither your Majesty nor myself is it given to do much.

You have three daughters, Solveig, Ulva, and little Kirsten; one of them must go over Ringfalla Bridge without stumbling and without speaking one word.



"AN ENAMELLED BOX" (*p.* 102).

This done, your troubles and my own are at an end."

Now, Ringfalla Bridge it was that spanned the river between King Kaftan's own territory and that of the Klavs, and what between the Klavs themselves and the

Neck who inhabited the river, it had a very evil reputation indeed.

The King looked grave, and then he laughed rather grimly. "There won't be much difficulty about that," he said. "To cross it has been the desire of their hearts ever since they were babies; it is only my strict orders that keep them from it."

"She who undertakes it must go of her own free will, and if she accomplishes it without stumbling and without speaking, the kingdom is saved." Those were the last words of the hart ere bidding the King good-night, and they were ringing in his ears when he awoke in the morning. But he was no longer lying on the silken cushions on which he had rested the night before. Pavilion, garden, and hart had vanished, the sun was high in the heavens, he was lying on a heap of moss and ferns in the wood, with Rolf standing over him and thrusting his soft nozzle into his face.

The King was greatly perplexed as to whether all the events of the preceding night had actually happened, or if he had only dreamt them, and was rather inclined to the latter belief. Mounting Rolf, and leaving that good steed to find his own way back to the camp, he pondered deeply over all the hart had told him, and resolved at least to try what he had suggested.

When at last he came to the camp it was nearly deserted, as most of the party had gone to hunt for the King, but after much blowing of horns the company was collected, and, abandoning all further idea of sport, rode back to the capital.

There they found eveything silent, except that the bells were mournfully tolling, and the flag over the palace hanging half-mast high. "What is this? Who is dead?" asked the King, but no one seemed inclined to explain.

At last the captain of the guard, who could not run away, was forced to salute and answer the King.

"Sire," he said, "your Majesty's daughter, the Princess Solveig, was drowned yesterday in trying to cross Ringfalla Bridge."

Greatly to the captain's surprise, however, the King inquired no further on the subject, but went straight up to the tower where the apartments of the three Princesses were situated.

There he found the two youngest overwhelmed with grief for their sister's loss, but overjoyed to see him and give an account of the catastrophe.

On the previous day, after seeing the King start at the head of a great cavalcade on his hunting expedition, the three Princesses cast about in their minds how they might amuse themselves, and finally agreed to go down and picnic by the river. Now, although the river itself was not absolutely forbidden, they were quite aware that the King disapproved of their going there, but they pacified their consciences by taking a strong escort, their old nurse, and a very large variety of hampers containing lunch.

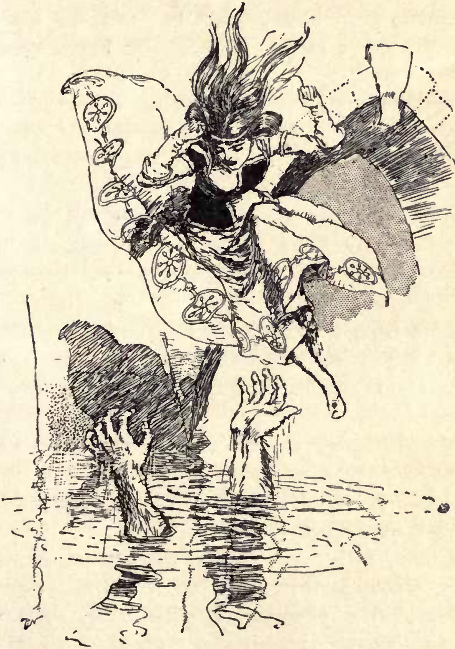
Poor old Nurse Gerda was as much averse to the expedition as King Kaftan himself could have been, and told gruesome tales of the evil water spirit and his doings; but the Princesses only laughed, and enjoyed preparing their own lunch, and eating it afterwards, extremely.

Then they wandered along the banks, gathering primroses and long grasses, all the while drawing near to the forbidden bridge; but it looked so inviting with its stone parapet and curious wooden pavement, and the water flowed so peacefully beneath the arches, that they there and then made up their minds to cross it, and drew lots to decide which should venture first. The lot fell to Solveig, the eldest, and she set out boldly with six archers to guard her—three before and three behind, walking abreast—a last precaution insisted upon by Gerda, the nurse, who watched the proceeding in terror.

All went well till they had almost reached the middle, then she tripped, and in falling touched the parapet, which instantly gave way, and the Princess fell into the river. As she touched the water a great pair of hairy arms caught and drew her under, so that she was seen no more. "And," continued Ulva, who up till now had done most of the talking, "the wall closed up again, with no sign of a break, directly she disappeared, and though two of the guard jumped in after her, the Neck took no notice of them, and they swam ashore in the end quite safely."

"The bridge is enchanted," said the King gloomily; and then he told them his adventure with the white hart.

"Then," said Ulva, with great decision, "I will go: it is very simple. Solveig talked to Ulf, the archer, all the time, and was looking at the river when she stumbled. Now, I know what is required of me: I will look at my feet and say nothing, not a word. Do, father, let me go." And she gave the King no peace till he consented; but she fared no better than her sister.



"A GREAT PAIR OF HAIRY ARMS CAUGHT AND DREW HER UNDER" (*p.* 106).

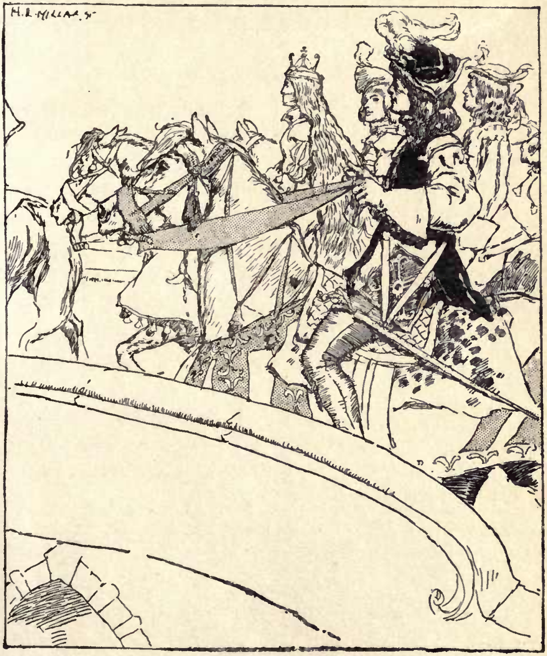
Boldly and silently she marched in the very centre of the fatal bridge, till suddenly she saw in front of her an enormous serpent with fiery eyes and forked tongue, with head up ready to spring. Poor Ulva's chief fear in life was a snake. She recoiled in terror, calling to warn the archers, who had seen nothing. And then the flooring gave way beneath her, and she too sank into the flood, a great pair of hairy hands clutching her as she fell.

Then there was great mourning throughout the land. The people clothed themselves in black, and the King reviled the hart and his own folly in acting on his advice, and refused to be comforted.

Then little Kirsten, the youngest sister, and the fairest maiden in the land, put her white arms about his neck and told him to be of good cheer; "for I will ride across," she said, "and if Freyja my mare stumble, it will be her fault, not mine, and I will neither speak nor scream, for they will tie a scarf over my lips so that I cannot. So, father, let me go, for it is I who will save the kingdom."

But the King swore a great oath, and vowed she should not, and for three days nothing could move him. Then, the Princess prevailed, and the whole city came out to see her ride over Ringfalla Bridge.

This time neither guards nor soldiers attempted to cross—a dozen courtiers, richly apparelled and mounted, accompanied the youngest Princess, who, dressed in white and all her pet jewels, with diamond fireflies glistening in the golden hair that floated to her little shoes, and her small, red mouth bound fast with a silken scarf, rode gaily upon Freyja till she had crossed the middle of the bridge, when, once again, appeared a wonder on the verge of the forest—a great white hart, with horns and hoofs of burnished gold. And straightway all the courtiers were tearing after it helter-skelter in hot haste, entirely forgetful of the poor little Princess and everything else.



"THE YOUNGEST PRINCESS RODE GAILY UPON FREYJA" (*p.* 108)

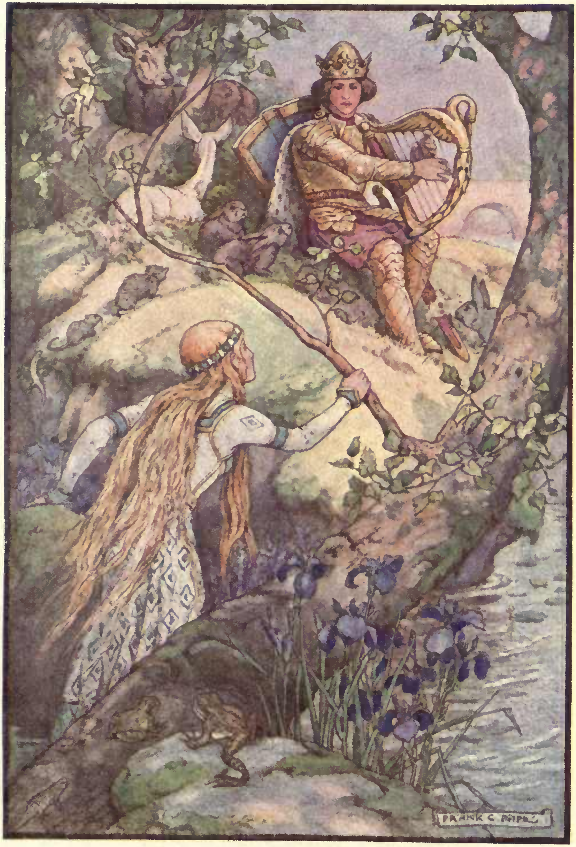
And Freyja that morning was very frisky; she minced along sideways on her golden shoes, coquetting with her own shadow, and making little playful snaps at her bridle. So she, too, stumbled at last on the treacherous planks, throwing her mistress over the parapet into the swiftly running stream; but this time no demon hands were stretched out to receive their prey—only a flash of white and gold ere the water closed over her head, and then all was still.

Meantime the white hart was giving the truant courtiers a lively time of it; he bounded, trotted, and doubled, keeping all the time close to the bridge, but eluding all their efforts to come near him. When, however, the maiden fell, a marvellous thing chanced—the beautiful beast vanished, and in his place stood the handsomest knight that had ever been seen in that or any other land. His armour was of gold, curiously inlaid with silver; on his helmet was a crown of emeralds, and his long purple mantle was lined with ermine, so there could be no doubt about his being a King.

Then all the courtiers doffed their plumed caps, and did obeisance to him; but the stranger, after acknowledging their homage, called aloud for "Asaph," and out of the wood, running as fast as he could, came a beautiful little page, clothed in green, and carrying a golden harp.

Then the strange knight crossed the bridge and saluted King Kaftan, who was standing on the bank looking at the river like one dazed.

"Be of good cheer, Sir King," he cried; "the Princess Kirsten has broken the charm, and I am no longer the white hart, but the rightful King of your troublesome Klavs—me they obey and no other; and now, thanks


FRANK C PAPE

"And then little Kirsten came smiling out of the water."

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for your courtesy." So saying, he took the harp from his little foot-page, and, seating himself on the bank, began to play.

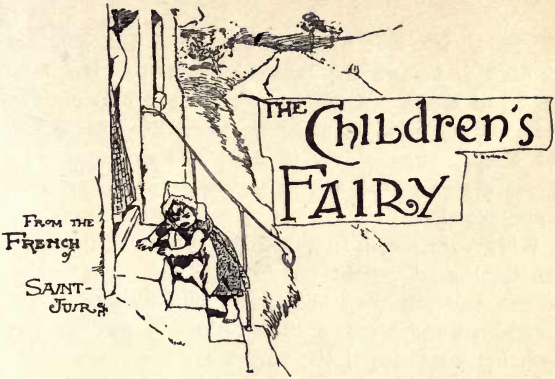
Very softly at first, but so wondrous were the magic notes that all the assembled people listened silent and motionless, for never before had they heard the like. First the sound was like the distant echo of silver trumpets when they welcomed the host back from battle; and then coming, as it were, nearer, like the ripple of waves on a pebbly beach, and all the fishes swam up to listen, while out of the wood flocked bird and beast also. So wondrous was the strain.

And then little Kirsten came smiling out of the water and sat upon the harper's knee, and one arm he put about her to hold her fast, but still he kept on playing. And now the music waxed fierce and terrible, like the roll of thunder among the mountains, or the crash of armies when they meet in battle. And the waves grew black and angry and lashed themselves into foam, for the Neck, the evil water spirit, was furious, but he could not fight against his master, and so at the last he also came forth, black and hideous, but subdued, leading the two Princesses Solveig and Ulva, who looked more beautiful than ever, and none the worse for their sojourn below the river.

So there were great rejoicings in both kingdoms, for the youngest Princess had broken the spell laid on Sir Sigurd by the Neck, who caught him in the forest alone without his harp, and condemned him to wander as a white hart until a Royal Princess should of her own free will cross Ringfalla Bridge without stumbling and without talking.

This little Kirsten did, and she had her reward, for she married Sigurd and reigned over the Klavs, who were turbulent no more, because their King and Queen had been born for the special purpose of ruling over them.

The Children's Fairy.



THE CHILDREN'S FAIRY

FROM THE FRENCH OF SAINT-JUIRS

IT was a dull, heavy afternoon, and the long, dusty road looked quite deserted, not a horse or even a foot-passenger in sight. The birds were taking their afternoon siesta, and the leaves were hanging down languidly from the poor trees, which were dying with thirst. There were three solitary-looking, tumble-down cottages on one side of the road, and presently the door of one of them opened, and a woman's voice called out:

"Come, Yvette, come, go out and play."

In answer to this summons a little girl of some three or four years old soon appeared, and with great difficulty on all fours began to descend the steep steps from the house to the footpath. It was quite a piece of work, that perilous descent, and it was accomplished slowly, carefully, and very awkwardly by what looked like nothing but a bundle of clothes.

The child had on a little bonnet made of two pieces of figured muslin sewn together, and from which a few tresses of fair hair which had escaped fell over her forehead and down the back of her neck. Her little frock had been lengthened many times, and, consequently, the waist was now up under the arms, like one sees in the Empire dresses. As to shoes and stockings—well, it was not very cold, and so they were put away for a future occasion.

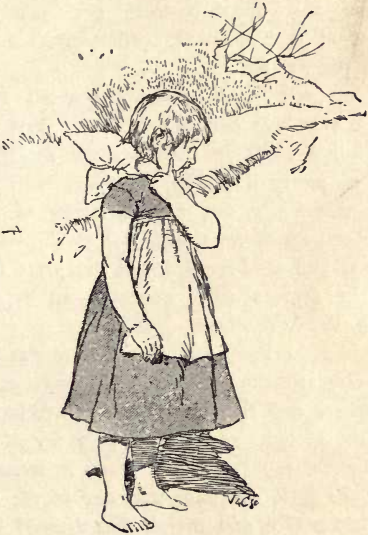
When once she had reached the bottom of the steps, the child stood upright and looked round for a minute or two, evidently deep in thought, with her little finger pressed against her face. Play! Yes, it was all very well, but what should she play at?

At the very time when the poor little mite was turning this question over in her mind, hundreds of other children, accompanied by their mother or by their nurse, would be all out in the gardens or parks, and they would have with them all kinds of games and toys, from the favourite spade and bucket to a real little steam-boat, which would sail along on the ponds. They would have cannons, skipping-ropes, reins (all covered with little bells), hoops, battledores and shuttlecocks, bowls, marbles, balls, balloons, dolls of every description, pistols, guns, swords, and, in fact, everything that the heart of a child can desire.

Then, too, those other children nearly always had little playmates, so that it was easy enough to organise a game

But, Yvette—on that deserted road, what could she do? Her father, a poor road-mender, earned only just enough to make a bare living for his wife and child, and certainly not a halfpenny could be spared for toys.

Yvette sat down just near a great heap of stones, which her father had to break into small pieces in order to fill in the ruts. When she was comfortably installed, she began to fumble in her pocket, and there she certainly found all kinds of wonderful things: two cherry-stones, a piece of string, a small carrot, a shoe-button, a small penny knife, a little bit of blue braid and some crumbs of bread. Now, these were all very nice in their way, and were indeed very valuable articles, but somehow they did not appeal to Yvette at all just



"DEEP IN THOUGHT" (*p.* 116).

then. She put them all very carefully back one by one in her pocket.

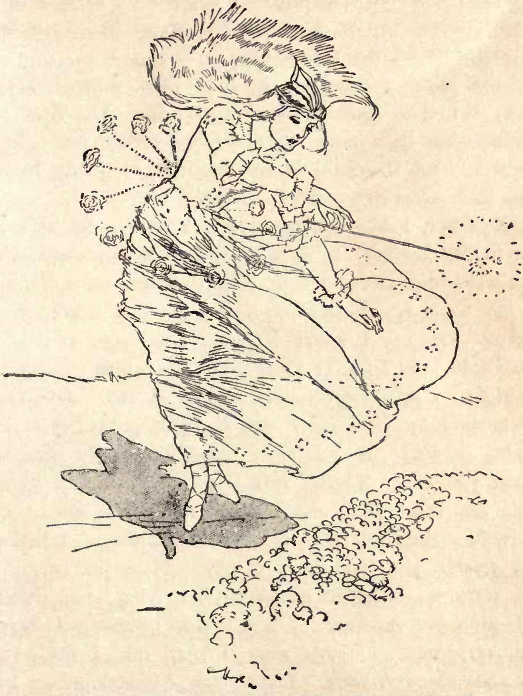
Then there was a profound silence. Yvette was not happy. The little face puckered itself up into a significant grimace—the little nose was all screwed up, and the mouth was just opening—tears were surely on the way! Just at that moment, fortunately, the Children's Fairy was passing by.

Now you, perhaps, do not know about this Fairy, for no one ever sees her, but it is the very one which makes children smile in their dreams, and gives them all kinds of pretty thoughts. There is no limit to the power of this Fairy, for, with a stroke of her magic wand, she can transform things just as she wishes. She is very good and kind-hearted, and the proof is that she bestows her favours more generally on the poor and unfortunate than on others.

Well, this good Fairy saw that Yvette was just going to cry. She stretched her golden wand out over the heap of stones and then flew away again, laughing, for she was just as light and as gay as a ray of sunshine.

Now, directly the Fairy had gone, it seemed to the road-mender's little daughter that one of the big stones near her had a face, and that it was dressed just like a little baby. Oh, it was really just like a little baby! Yvette stretched out her hand, took the stone up, and immediately began to feel for it all the love which a mother feels for her child.

"Ah!" she said to it, cuddling it up in her arms; "do you want to be my little girl? You don't speak—oh! but that is because you are too young—but I see you would like to. Very well, then; I will be your mother, and I shall love you and never whip you. You must be good, though, and then I shall never scold you. Oh! but if you are not good—you know, I've

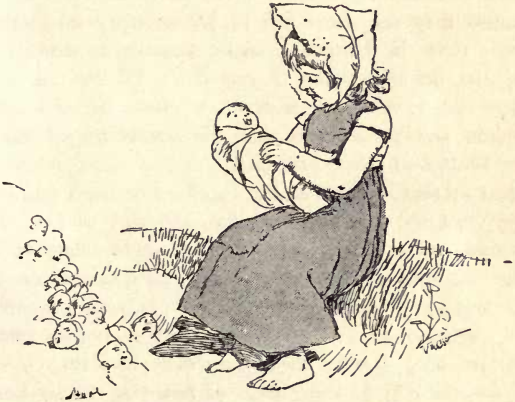


"SHE STRETCHED HER GOLDEN WAND OVER THE HEAP OF STONES" (*p.* 118).

got a birch rod. Now, come, I'm going to dress you better: you look dreadful in that frock." Hereupon Yvette rolled her child up in her pinafore, so that there was nothing to be seen of the stone but what was supposed to be the baby's head.

"Oh! how pretty she is, dear little thing. There, now, she shall have something to eat. Ah! you are crying—but you must not cry, my pretty one—there, there." And the hard stone was rocked gently in the soft little arms of its fond mother.

"Bye-bye, baby—bye-bye-bye." Yvette sang with all her might, tapping her little daughter's back energetically, but evidently all to no purpose, for the stone refused to go to sleep. "Ah! naughty girl; you won't go to sleep? Oh no, I won't tell you any more stories. I have told you Tom Thumb, and that's quite enough for to-night. Go to sleep—quick—quick, I say. Oh, dear, dear, naughty child—I've got a knife—what! you are crying again! If you only knew how ugly you are when you cry! There! now I'm going to slap you—take that, and that, and that, to make you quiet. Oh dear, how dreadful it is to have such a child. I believe I'll change you, and have a boy. Now, just say you are sorry for being so naughty—— What! you won't? I'll give you another chance. Now—one—two—three. Oh, very well. I know what I shall do. I shall just go and take you back. I shall say: 'If you please, I've got a dreadful little girl, and I want to change her for a nice little boy, named Eugene.' And then they'll say: 'Yes, ma'am; will you have him with light hair or dark?' 'Oh,' I shall say, 'I don't mind, as long as he is good.' 'He'll be very dear, though, ma'am,' they'll say; 'good little boys are very rare, and they cost a great deal.' 'How much?' I shall ask. 'Why, one penny, ma'am.' And then I shall think about it—— Now, then, are you going to be good, and say you are sorry? No? Oh! very well—it's too late now—I've



"OH! HOW PRETTY SHE IS" (*p.* 120).

changed you. I have no little girl now, but a very pretty little boy, named Zizi."

The stone immediately underwent a complete transformation. Just now, when it was a little girl, it had been very quiet and gentle, and had kept quite still on Yvette's lap. Now that it was a boy there was no more peace: it would jump about, and it would try to get away, for boys are always so restless.

"Zizi, will you be still, and will you stay on my lap instead of tumbling about in the road? There, let me lift you up! Oh, dear! how heavy boys are. There, now, don't you stir, but just eat your bread and milk. It will make you grow, and then when you are big you'll have beautiful grey whiskers, like father. You shall have a sword, too, and perhaps you shall be a policeman. It's very nice to be a policeman, you know, because they are never put in prison—they take other people there if the people make a noise in the street. Oh, Zizi, do keep still. If you don't, I'll call the wolf—you know, the big wolf that runs off with little children and takes them into the woods to eat them up. Wolf, wolf, where are you?"

Just at that moment a dog appeared—a large, well-fed, happy-looking dog, impudent too, and full of fun. He belonged to a carrier who was always moving about from place to place, and the dog, accustomed as he was to these constant journeys, had got rather familiar, like certain commercial travellers, who, no matter where they are, always make themselves quite at home.

Now, the dog had got tired of following his master's cart, and when he saw something in the distance which was moving about, he bounded off to discover what it was. This something was Yvette and her little boy.

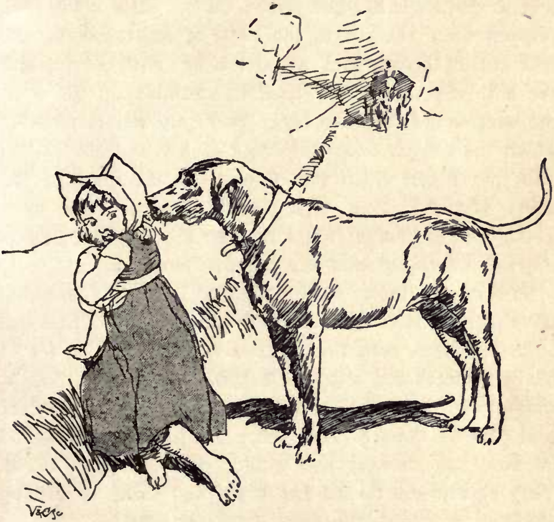
"Look, look!" exclaimed the small mother, and there was a tremor in her voice. "You see, he is coming—the big wolf!"

He *was* coming, there was no doubt about that, for he was tearing along, and his tongue was hanging out and his ears were pricked up.

The little stone boy was not at all frightened, but

Yvette began to regret having called the dreadful animal. Oh! if she could only get away now; but, alas! she did not dare to move or even to speak.

The impertinent dog came straight to them. Poor Yvette, half frightened to death, threw away the precious



"THE IMPERTINENT DOG CAME STRAIGHT TO THEM" (*p.* 123).

stone baby she had been fondling, and, picking herself up, began to run, calling out: "Mother! Mother!"

The dog was quite near her, jumping up at her, and then suddenly he turned to go and sniff at the little stone boy. He probably thought it was a bone or a piece of bread, but he was soon undeceived, and then he rushed to the hedge to bark and wake up all the birds.

As to Yvette, she was hurrying along as fast as her little legs could carry her, for she was in despair, as she thought the wolf was just behind her, and she imagined that she still felt his hot breath on her little hand. She stopped when she got to the steps of her home, for she was out of breath and all trembling with terror, and she felt sure that if she tried to scramble up the steps the wolf would bite her legs. Suddenly the inspiration, which the ostrich once had, came to her, and she rushed into the corner which was formed by the front of the house and the stone steps, and holding her face close to the wall, so that she could not see the dreadful animal, she was convinced that she too was out of his sight.

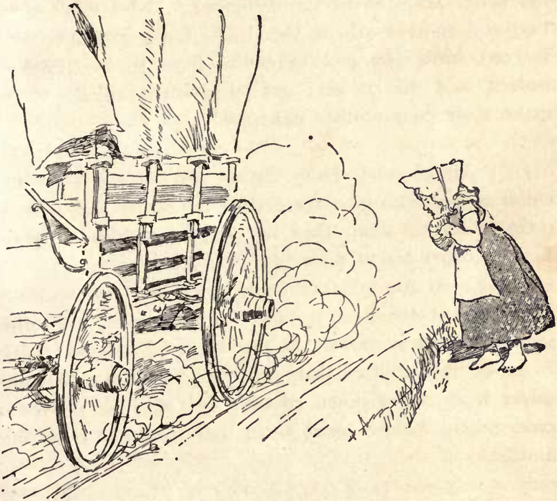
She stayed there some minutes in perfect anguish, thinking: "Oh! if I move, he'll eat me up!" She was quite surprised even that he did not find her, and that his great teeth did not bite her, for she always thought wolves were so quick to eat up little girls. Whatever could he be doing? And then, not hearing any sound of him, she thought she would risk one peep round. Very slowly she turned her head, and then, as nothing dreadful happened, she grew bolder and bolder.

The wolf was not in sight, and instead of the barking which had terrified her, she now heard a lot of little bells tinkling, and in the distance she saw a waggon with four horses coming along.

The sound of the bells was so fascinating that Yvette forgot her duty as a mother, and stood there watching the waggon as it approached.

The horses were all grey, and they were coming so fast. Suddenly the child uttered an awe-struck cry.

Her child, her little son, was under the heavy wheels! Crunch! crunch! and it had gone by, the horrible waggon. Yvette went on to the horse-road, and her little heart was very full; for there, where poor Zizi had been lying, there was only some yellowish crunched stone. Zizi had been ground into powder by the huge wheels. The poor child was in despair, and, with tears in her eyes, she shook her little fists at the carrier, who was whipping up his horses.



"HER CHILD, HER LITTLE SON, WAS UNDER THE HEAVY WHEELS!"

"Cruel, wicked man!" she cried, and then her eyes happening to fall on the heap of stones which had supplied her with a family, she saw another stone smiling at her now. She ran quickly to it, picked it up and kissed it affectionately, and then, happy in her new treasure, she cried out defiantly to the carrier, whom she could still see in the distance: "Ah! I don't care! I've got another—there, then! and it's a girl this time. I won't have any more dreadful boys to be afraid of wolves, and to go and get themselves killed just to make their poor mother unhappy."

Oh! kind, good Fairy, you who watch over the children, and who give them their happiness and console them in sorrow when they are playing at life—oh, good Fairy, do not forget your big children.

Older men tell me that I am young, but the younger ones do not think so; and I, myself, saw, only this morning, a silver thread in my hairs. Oh, kind Fairy, Fairy of the children, help me, too, to believe that the moon is made of green cheese; for, after all, our happiness here below consists in our faith and in our illusions.

"Wittysplinter."

“WITTY-SPLINTER”

From the German
of Clemens Brentano.

ONCE upon a time there was a King of Roundabout who had, among many other servants, a page-boy who was called Wittysplinter, and he preferred him above all the others, and showered upon him honours and presents, because of his uncommon skill and cleverness, and because everything the King gave him to do he always accomplished successfully. Now, because of the great favour which the King showed to Wittysplinter, all the other page-boys and servants were jealous of him; for, if his cleverness were rewarded with money, they generally received nothing but scoldings for their stupidity; if Wittysplinter received praise from the King, they generally received a blowing-up; when Wittysplinter got a new coat to his back, they got instead the application of a stick to theirs; and if Wittysplinter were permitted to kiss the King's hand, they were only allowed to touch it when they got a smack from it.

On account of all these things, therefore, they got very angry with Wittysplinter, and went about murmuring and whispering the whole day long, and putting their heads together and plotting how best they could deprive Wittysplinter of the love of the King. One of them scattered a lot of peas on the steps up to the throne, so that Wittysplinter might stumble and break the glass sceptre which he always had to present to the King; another nailed pieces of melon skin to his shoes, so that he might slide along and make a dreadful mess of the King's gown when he was handing him the soup; a third put all sorts of horrid flies in a straw, and blew them into the King's wig when Wittysplinter was dressing it; a fourth played some other nasty trick, and every one sought to do something to deprive Wittysplinter of the King's favour. Wittysplinter was so cautious, however, and so clever and watchful, that everything they did was in vain, and he brought all the commands of the King to a successful issue.

Well, when they found that all these manœuvres were quite useless, they determined to try something else. Now, the King had an enemy, whom he could never get the better of, and who was always doing him some mischief. This was a giant who was called Sleepyhead, and who lived in a large mountain, where he had a splendid palace surrounded by a thick, gloomy wood; and with the exception of his wife, Thickasmud, no human being lived with him; but a lion who was called Hendread, and a bear called Honeybeard, and a wolf called Lambsnapper, and a dog called Harescare, acted as his servants. He had also in the stables a horse called Flyinglegs.

Now, there dwelt in the neighbourhood of Roundabout a very beautiful Queen, Madam Flosk, who had a daughter, Miss Flink, and the King of Roundabout, who wanted to possess all the land adjoining his own, was very anxious to marry Madam Flosk. But she was proud, and let him know that many other Kings were also anxious to marry her, and that she would accept in marriage that King only who was most expeditious, and that he who was first by her side when she went into church next Monday morning at half-past ten should have her as his wife, and all her possessions into the bargain.

Thereupon the King summoned all his household, and put the question to them: "How am I to manage to be first in the church on Monday morning next, and so gain Queen Flosk for my wife?"

Then his servants answered him, and said: "You must gain possession of the horse Flyinglegs, belonging to the giant Sleepyhead; if you once get astride of it, no one can possibly get there before you; and to get this horse for you no one is more suited than Wittysplinter, who is so successful in all he undertakes."

Thus spoke the wicked servants, in the hope that the Giant Sleepyhead would kill Wittysplinter. The King, accordingly, commanded Wittysplinter to bring the horse Flyinglegs to him.

Wittysplinter got a hand-barrow, and placed a bees hive on it, then a sack into which he thrust a cock, a hare, and a lamb, and laid it on the barrow; he took with him, also, a long piece of rope, and a large box full of snuff;

slung round him a riding whip, fastened a pair of good spurs to his boots, and quietly set off, pushing his barrow in front of him.

Towards evening he had reached the summit of the high mountain, and when he had traversed the wood he saw before him the castle of the giant Sleepyhead. Night drew on, and very soon he heard the giant Sleepyhead and his wife, Thickasmud, and his lion, Hendread, and his bear, Honeybeard, and his wolf, Lambsnapper, and his dog, Harescare, all snoring loudly; only the horse, Flyinglegs, was still awake, and stamping the floor of the stable with its hoofs.

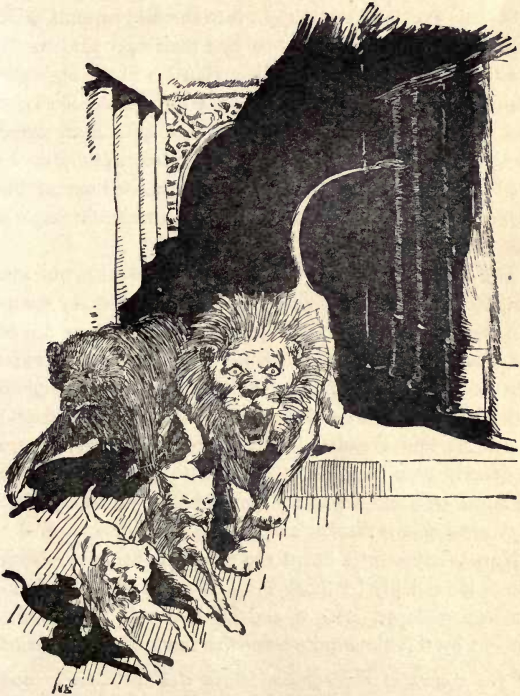
Then Wittysplinter took the long piece of rope very quietly from the sack, and stretched it across in front of the door of the castle from one tree to another, and placed the box of snuff in the middle; next he took the beehive and placed it in a tree by the side of the path, and then went into the stable and undid the fastenings of Flyinglegs. He placed the sack with the lamb, the hare, and the cock on its back, and jumping up himself and using his spurs, he rode out of the stable.

But the horse Flyinglegs could speak, and screamed out quite loudly:—

"Thickasmud and Sleepyhead!
Honeybeard and Hendread!
Lambsnapper and Harescare!
I'm being stolen, so pray beware!"

and then it galloped off as hard as it could, because, with Wittysplinter on its back, it couldn't help itself. Then Thickasmud and Sleepyhead woke up and heard the cry of the horse Flyinglegs. Quickly they awakened the bear

Honeybeard, the lion Hendread, the wolf Lambsnapper, and the dog Harescare, and all together they rushed pell-mell out of the house, to try and catch Wittysplinter with the horse Flyinglegs.



"THEY RUSHED PELL-MELL OUT OF THE HOUSE."

But in the darkness the giant Sleepyhead and his wife Thickasmud stumbled over the rope which Wittysplinter had tied in front of the castle door, and, splosh !—they fell with their eyes and noses right into the box of snuff which he had placed there. They rubbed their eyes and sneezed one time after another, and Sleepyhead said : " Your good health,* Thickasmud." " I thank you," answered Thickasmud, and then said : " Good health to you, Sleepyhead." " I thank you," answered he ; and so on, until they had wept the snuff out of their eyes and sneezed it out of their noses, and by the time this had happened Wittysplinter was clear of the wood.

The bear Honeybeard was the first after him, but when he came to the bees' hive the smell of the honey enticed him, and he wanted to eat it ; then the bees came buzzing out, and stung him all over the face to such an extent that he ran back half blind to the castle. Wittysplinter had already got some distance out of the wood when he heard the lion Hendread coming bounding after him, so he quickly took the cock out of his sack, and when it flew up into a tree and began to crow, the lion got so dreadfully frightened that it ran back again.

Now Wittysplinter heard the wolf Lambsnapper behind him. He quickly let loose the lamb out of his sack, and the wolf galloped after it, and let him ride off in safety. He was by this time quite near the town when he heard a bark behind him, and looking round, saw the dog Harescare coming tearing after him. Quickly he let loose the hare out of the sack, and the dog ran after it, and he arrived safely in the town.

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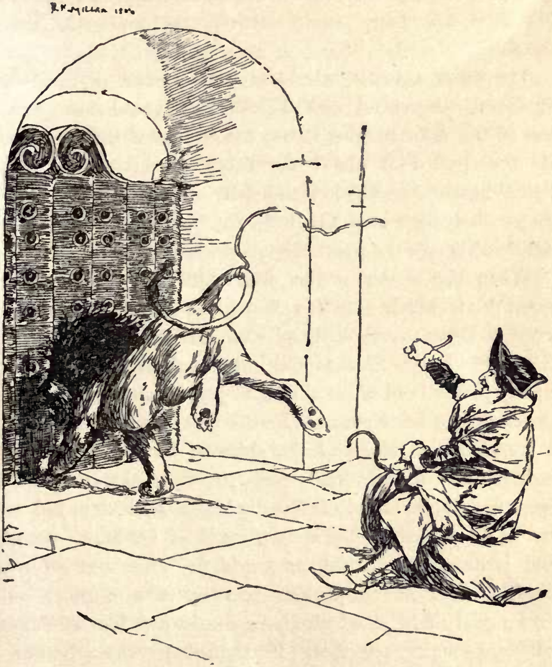
* The custom of wishing one "Good Health" after a sneeze, prevalent in Germany and other European countries, is supposed to have origin in the fact that the crisis, or turning-point for better or worse of a certain fever, is indicated by a sneeze from the patient, and hence the natural expression of a hope for a favourable recovery.

The King thanked Wittysplinter very much for the norse, but the wicked servants of the Court were very much annoyed that he had come off with a whole skin. On the following Monday the King mounted upon his horse Flyinglegs and rode off to Queen Flosk, and the horse galloped so quickly that he was there long before any of the other Kings, and had already danced several of his wedding dances when they arrived. Just when he was about to start off home with his Queen, his servants said to him: "Your Majesty has indeed the giant Sleepyhead's horse, but how much more splendid it would be if you had his clothes as well, which are said to surpass anything that man has ever seen. The clever Wittysplinter would, no doubt, very soon bring them to you if you commanded him to do so."

The King was at once possessed with a great desire for Sleepyhead's clothes, and again gave the commission to Wittysplinter. When the latter had started off upon the road the wicked servants rejoiced, and thought that this time he would surely not escape the clutches of the giant Sleepyhead.

On this occasion Wittysplinter took nothing with him but a few good strong sacks. On arriving at the giant's castle he climbed up into a tree, and lay hid until every one was in bed. When everything had become quiet he climbed down again. Just then he heard Madam Thickasmud calling out: "Sleepyhead, my pillow is very low; fetch me a bundle of straw from outside." Thereupon Wittysplinter quickly slipped into a bundle of straw, and Sleepyhead carried him, along with the straw, into his room, shoved him under the pillow, and then lay down in bed again.

As soon as they had fallen asleep Wittysplinter packed all Sleepyhead's and Thickasmud's clothes into his sack, and very quietly and very carefully tied it to the tail of the lion Hendread; then he tied the wolf Lambsnapper, and the bear Honeybeard, and the dog Harescare, who were lying about asleep, fast to the giant's bed, and opened the door very wide. So far he had managed everything just as he would have wished, but he wanted to take away the giant's beautiful bed-cover as well. So he gave the corner of it a slight tug, then another, and another, and so on, until it fell on the floor. He immediately wrapped himself up in it, and seated himself on the sack containing the giant's clothes, which he had tied to the lion's tail. Soon the cool night wind began to blow through the open door and over Thickasmud's legs, and waking up, she cried, "Sleepyhead, you've pulled all the bed-clothes off me. I've nothing at all over me." "Thickasmud, *you've* pulled all the clothes off *me*," and thereupon they began to belabour each other, so that Wittysplinter began to laugh loudly at them. As soon as they heard this they called out "Thieves, thieves! Up, Hendread! Up, Lambsnapper! Up, Honeybeard and Harescare! Thieves, thieves!" At this all the animals woke up, and the lion sprang forth out of the door. Now Wittysplinter, wrapped up in the bed-cover, was sitting on the bundle of clothes tied to the lion's tail; and as soon as the lion began to run, he was driven along just as if he was in a carriage.



"HE COULDN'T STOP HIMSELF" (*p.* 138).

He began to cry out several times "kikriki-ki-kri-ki,' just like a cock, and the lion got such a fright at this that he ran in mad terror right up to the gates of the city. When quite near to the gates, Wittysplinter took out his knife and cut the string, and the lion, who was going at such a rate that he couldn't stop himself, ran his head full bang against the gates and fell down dead.

The other animals, who had been bound to the bedstead of Sleepyhead and Thickasmud, could not get it out of the door because it was too wide, and they dragged it and pulled it about the room so much that both Sleepyhead and Thickasmud fell out, and became so angry that they beat the wolf, the bear, and the dog to death, although the poor animals really couldn't help it.

When the watch in the city heard the noise of the great blow which the lion had given to the gates, they opened them, and Wittysplinter carried the clothes of Sleepyhead and Thickasmud in triumph to the King, who nearly jumped out of his skin with joy, for such clothes had never before been seen. There was, among other things, a hunting-coat, made of the skins of all the four-footed animals, and so beautifully sewn together that one could see the whole story of Reynard the Fox depicted on it. Also a bird-catcher's coat, made of feathers from all the birds in the world, an eagle in front and an owl behind; and in the pockets there were a musical box and a peal of bells, which made music just like all kinds of birds singing together. Further, there was a bathing-dress and a fisher's-dress, made from the skins of all the fish in the world, sewn together so that one saw a whale-hunt and a great catch of herrings on it. Then a garden-dress of Madam Thickasmud's, on which all sorts of flowers and fruits, salads and vegetables, were embroidered. But what surpassed everything else was the bed-cover; it was made entirely of the skins of bats, and all the stars of heaven were represented on it by means of diamonds.

The Royal family were quite dumb with astonishment and wonder. Wittysplinter was kissed and embraced, and his enemies nearly exploded with rage to see that he had again escaped without hurt from the hands of Sleepyhead.

Even yet they did not despair, and put the idea into the King's head that nothing was now wanting to his dignity but that he should possess the castle of Sleepyhead itself, and the King, who was a very child in these matters and always wanted to have whatever took his fancy, said immediately to Wittysplinter that he wanted Sleepyhead's castle, and that as soon as he got it for him he would be rewarded.

Wittysplinter did not take much time to think about it, and for the third time ran off to the abode of Sleepyhead. When he arrived there, the giant was not at home, and he heard something in the room crying like a calf. Then he looked through the window, and saw Dame Thickasmud chopping wood, and at the same time nursing a little giant on her arm, who was showing his teeth and bleating like a calf.

" Wittysplinter went in, and said: " Good-day, my great and beautiful, broad and portly dame! How is it that you have got to do so much work and have to nurse your child at the same time? Have you no maids or grooms? Where is your husband, then?"

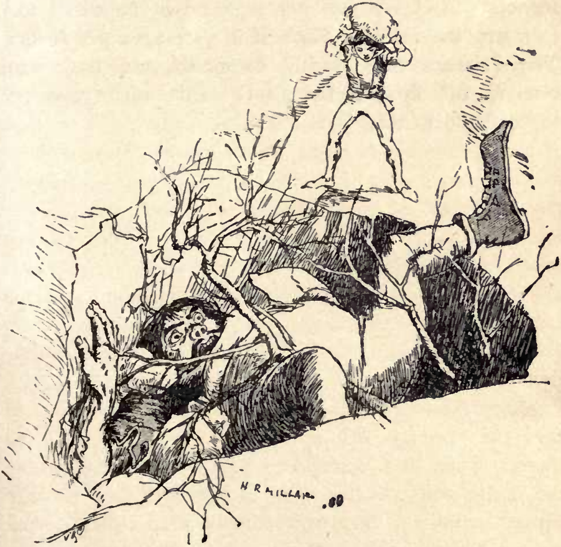
" Ach," said Madam Thickasmud, " my husband has gone out to invite all his relations to a feast we are going to hold. And I have to cook everything for myself now, for my husband killed the bear, and the wolf, and the dog, that used to help us; and the lion has run off, too."

"That is certainly very hard lines on you," said Wittysplinter. "If I could do anything to help you, I should be only too glad."

Then Thickasmud asked him to chop up four logs of wood into small pieces for her; and Wittysplinter took the axe and said to the giantess: "You might hold the wood for me a moment, please," and the giantess bent down and caught hold of the wood. Wittysplinter raised the axe in the air, and swish! down it came, and cut Thickasmud's head off and Mollakopp's at the same time, and there they lay.

The next thing he proceeded to do was to dig a large, deep hole right in front of the castle door, into which he threw Thickasmud and Mollakopp, and then covered over the opening with a thin layer of branches and leaves. Then he proceeded to light up all the rooms of the castle with candles and torches, and took a large copper kettle, and beat upon it with soup ladles. Then he got a tin funnel, and blew a blast on it just like a trumpet, and between each performance he shouted, "Hurrah! Long live His Majesty the King of Roundabout."

When Sleepyhead was returning home towards evening, and saw all the lights in the windows and heard the shouting, he was mad with rage, and ran with such fury against the door that he fell through the hole covered with branches and lay there a prisoner, shouting and making a great noise. Wittysplinter immediately ran down and threw large stones on him, until he had filled up the hole.



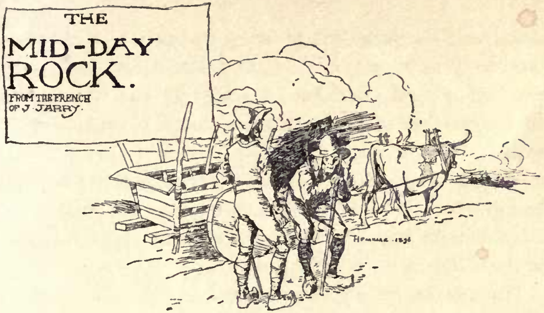
"WITTYSPLINTER THREW LARGE STONES ON HIM."

And now Wittysplinter took the key of the castle and ran with it to King Roundabout, who immediately betook himself to the castle, along with his wife Flosk and her daughter Flink and Wittysplinter, and inspected all there was to be seen there. After they had spent fourteen whole days in looking at an immense number of rooms, chambers, cellars, look-out towers, bakeries, furnaces, kitchens, wood-stove houses, dining-rooms, smoking-rooms, wash-houses, etc., the King asked Wittysplinter what he would like as a reward for his faithful services. And Wittysplinter replied that he would like to marry the Princess Flink, if it were agreeable to her. The Princess very readily consented, and they were married and lived in the giant's castle, where they are to be found to this day.

The Mid-day Rock.

THE MID-DAY ROCK.

FROM THE FRENCH OF J. JARRY.



ONCE upon a time there was a poor man, who lived somewhere in the middle of the woods near a place called Gâtines de Treigny. Everybody called him Father Rameau. Not that he had any children—he had not even ever been married; nor that he was very old, for he was barely fifty; but he had always had such a hard time of it that his hair had grown grey very early, and his back had been bent and bowed long before its time.

He was generally to be seen toiling along under a big bundle of brooms, which he made with the greatest skill from young birch branches, selling them on market days to the housewives of Saint-Amand or Saint-Sauveur.

Father Rameau was not ambitious, far from it; if he had been alone in the world, without relations depending on him, he would have been quite content to live on black bread every day of the week, with an occasional glass of wine from the charitable folk of the neighbourhood. But Father Rameau had a younger sister married to a vine-dresser of Perreuse, and he was god-father to their daughter; she was just growing up into a woman, and was so pretty and modest and intelligent, that every one had a good word for her, and now she was engaged to be married to a young man called George, a capital worker, but without a penny in the world. The wedding was to take place as soon as she was twenty; and they had given each other engagement rings—common leaden rings, bought from one of the pedlars who visit the hamlets of the district.

Humble as he was where he himself only was concerned, Father Rameau was proud indeed in matters connected with his niece.

"A leaden ring," he murmured, "when so many other girls, not half as good as my god-daughter, have a gold one! How I wish Madeleine could choose the one she liked best from the jeweller's shop in Saint-Sauveur! Ah, it's not much use wishing. If I put by every penny I could spare for years and years I could never afford it. Madeleine's poor, George is poor, I am poor, and always shall be. Well, we're honest, that's one comfort, and we needn't be jealous, at any rate."

As the old broomseller was thinking all this, he met George, who was driving a pair of oxen, their nostrils steaming in the first rays of the morning sun. "Good-day, lad," said he.

"Good-day, Father Rameau."

"Off to work already?"

"Yes, father. I'm just going over the master's fields for the last time before seed sowing; we shall begin next week. We're rather behind hand you know."

"So you are; October's nearly over."

"Can you guess what I was thinking of as I came along?"

"*What* you were thinking of?" You mean *who*," said Father Rameau, rather crossly.

"Well, yes, you're right. Madeleine is never out of my mind," answered George thoughtfully. "I was saying to myself that, if there are plenty of weeds over there' (and he pointed to the uncultivated moor with his goad), "there is good soil as well, and that any one who had time to clear even a corner of it might buy the girl he was engaged to——"

"A gold ring!"

"How *did* you guess what I meant? You don't come from Chêneau, where all the wizards live," laughed George.

"No witchcraft in that, nephew. The other day I saw how unhappy you were that you could only give Madeleine a leaden ring, and I was just as sorry myself that I couldn't buy her a better one . . . and ever since I've been trying to think of a way . . ."

"And have you found one, father?"

"*You've* found it for me, lad. I shall make a clearing of a bit of the moor."

Even at the risk of offending his future uncle, the young labourer could not help smiling.

"That's a task for stronger arms than yours, father," he said. "No one can beat you at cutting birch branches and making them into brooms. But that doesn't need so much muscle as digging up soil like this, pulling up the great roots out of it, or smashing and carrying away huge boulders of rock. Ah, if only I had not given my word to stay with my master till I am married!"

"You may laugh at me, lad, but I won't bear malice," said the old man. "If the old are not so strong as the young, they are more persevering. I shall clear a bit of the moor, and with the money from my first harvest we will go and buy the ring. Good-bye, lad."

"Good-bye, father; we shall see you doing wonders before long, I know."

"I shall be working for Madeleine," he said, "and your patron saint (George means cultivator of the soil) will help me."

At twelve precisely, Father Rameau came back to the moor with a heavy pick on his shoulder; he meant to set to work without delay.

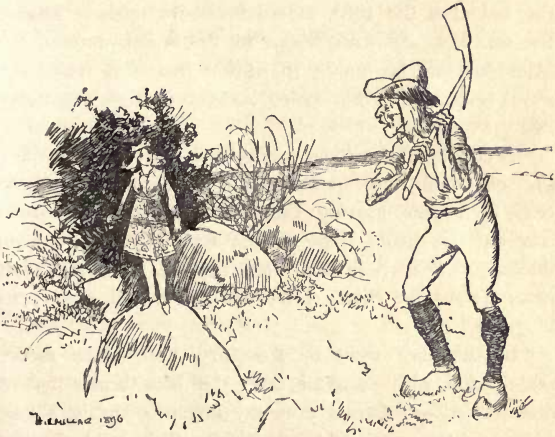
Bang went the first stroke of the pick, accompanied with the significant grunt diggers, woodmen, and such folk give over their work. But just as he was raising his arm for another try, he stood suddenly stock-still, with eyes staring wide in a white, terrified face.

From the midst of the boulders scattered about, which were trembling like Celtic monuments, had arisen an apparition, which the old man knew was supernatural and divine, though its form was human.

Imagine a tiny little lady, ethereal rather than thin, youthfully lovely and dainty, a kind of dream beauty, attired in a silvery tunic embroidered with gorse blossoms. On her head a wreath of heather; in her hand a wand of the broom plant in blossom; all around the holly, ferns, and junipers, all the wild plants and shrubs, were bowing down as if in homage to a Sovereign. A ray of sunlight was playing round her head like an aureole. She was the Fairy of the Moor.

"You are a bold man," she said to the old workman, "to dare thus to encroach on my domains." There was a thrill of anger in her clear voice, and her blue eyes sparkled.

"Lady Fairy," stammered the old man, "be merciful to a wretched labourer who never meant to wrong you. Your domains are so vast, I hoped there would be no harm if I took the liberty of borrowing just a little corner from you."



"HE STOOD SUDDENLY STOCK-STILL" (*p.* 148).

"What do you want it for?"

"To cultivate it," answered old Rameau, who was beginning to feel less frightened.

"To cultivate it!" cried the fairy. "You mean to dig it up, turn it over, and upset it all round! Do you not see how lovely it is now, and are you so presumptuous as to think you can do better for it than Nature has done already?" Her voice grew softer as she went on: "What could you find anywhere that is as beautiful as this spot in spring-time, when, under a sky of the tenderest blue, the little leaves are beginning to bud on the branches, the tufts of narcissus are opening among the marshes, and everywhere in the woods around the blackbirds are beginning to whistle their first notes, the doves keep up a gentle cooing, and the jays are chattering like parrots?"

"A couple of partridges calling to each other," answered the old man, "a quail uttering its three sonorous cries, or a lark soaring into the sky with its breathless melody, make a pleasanter sound, to my way of thinking. But these are birds that like to build their nests among the corn. They are not found near your kingdom."

"In summer," went on the fairy, "when the moors are flooded with sunshine, and the heat brings out a delicious odour of resin from my favourite shrubs, I love to look on the purple of the heather, and the gold of gorse and broom."

"I prefer the pink clover with the drowsy bees humming over it," answered the old man, "and the ripening harvest, yellow like your beautiful hair, Lady Fairy."

Fairy as she was, the queen of the moors was not displeased at the compliment. Father Rameau saw this from her face, and said to himself his cause was half won.

"In autumn," she retorted, though, "even here, there comes to me, out of the depths of the thickets near, the baying of the pack when the hunt is out, and often they traverse my domains to get from one part of the forest to another. The poor, hunted stag, whose tongue is hanging out of his mouth with weariness, makes for this very heap of rocks sometimes; then I help him to elude his cruel foes and to get away safely."

"Yes," said the old man, as if he liked this idea, "the dogs get their noses pricked on the thorn-bushes and lose trace of their prey. That is indeed a kind action. I, too, like to put the pack on a wrong scent. The stags are such dear things, with their soft brown eyes. Those in this neighbourhood know me, and when I sit down to make my brooms right in the middle of a copse, as I do sometimes, they come quite close up to me. If only there were wheat growing on your moor, you would be able to protect the hares, too, for they would then take refuge in the shelter of your park."

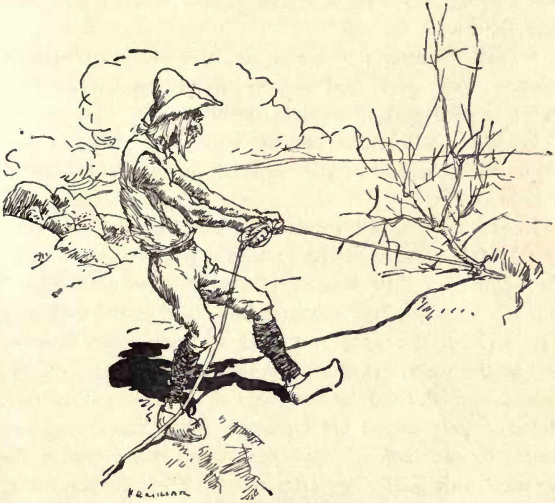
"But when you have pulled up my holly and junipers and broom-bushes, how shall I be able to make fires for the long winter evenings? I shall die, pierced by the cruel breath of the keen north wind, and be buried under a shroud of white snow."

"Oh, gracious fay, if you fear the cold, will there not always be the place of honour kept for you by our chimney-corner, in the little home I mean to build on the moor? You will come and get warm whenever you like by our fireside. My god-daughter, Madeleine, will keep you company, and some day, perhaps, I shall entreat you to be god-mother to her first baby."

Thus Father Rameau had his answer ready for all her objections. These last words of his touched the fairy, and the expression of her face became very soft and kind. "I know Madeleine well," she said; "I know how fair she is to see, in her snowy white caps. I know how her goodness is spoken of far and wide; and I have even heard that she is to marry that hard-working lad I saw talking with you this morning. They will be a charming pair, and their home will be a delightful place. And you, dear old man, who have no ambition for yourself, but only care for your dear ones, you will have your reward for your cheerful faith in the future. Take up your pick and have courage over your digging. I grant you this corner of my domain. The rest I am sure you will respect, for you are not greedy; will the others who come after you spare it, too? Alas, when once the moor has been cleared all over and cultivated, I shall have to die! But we will only think of the happiness of your young folk; and, silence! not a word of all this to any one!"

And with a finger on her lips, she vanished.

By the end of October Father Rameau had dug over, cleared, and prepared two acres of ground. All by himself? With his pickaxe and spade? Yes, quite by himself, and with his pickaxe and spade. He had worked as if by magic, for the fairy, always present and always invisible, had endowed him with some of her magic power. She helped him to split the hardest boulders, to haul up the most tenacious roots, to collect in bundles the old tree-stumps and weeds, and every kind of rubbish, and set fire to it, and so make the very first dressing the soil had ever had on it. Will you believe it? By seed-sowing time the ground was ready, and was sown with oats, which began to grow in no time, came well through all the frosts, and by the following April was waving abroad in a luxuriant mass of green. A lark built its nest in it, and every morning nodded its little tufted head at Father Rameau, who was watching over its nest, as if out of gratitude for what he had done.



FATHER RAMEAU CLEARS THE PATCH.

The harvest was splendid, and fetched a high price.

George could no longer smile at Father Rameau's old arms, and had to confess he had found his master: Father

Rameau smiled slily when he said, "After all, nephew, we shall have a gold ring for Madeleine." But when the time came for getting it, Madeleine would not allow it. "No, father," she said, "you have toiled and moiled this year at your digging; buy a plough: any one will lend you a plough-horse for a few days, and it won't be nearly such hard work for you."

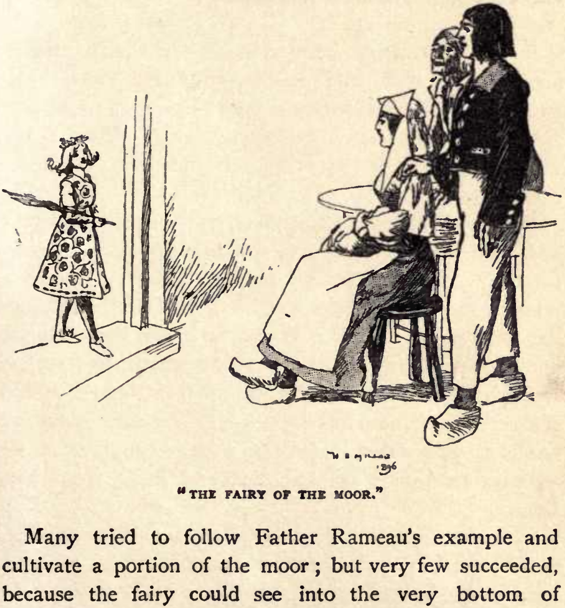
So when autumn came again, the old man cleared another two acres, and next summer his harvest was twice as big—and so were his profits.

Madeleine still refused the precious ring. "Buy a pair of oxen," she said; "you will be independent then of every one."

Next year the old man's field was bigger than ever; and Madeleine advised him to use the profit of his harvest for building a little house. Her modest, sensible advice was acted upon every time, and, in fact, when the wedding-day arrived, the gold ring had still not been bought and at the marriage ceremony, in the church at Treigny, it was over the old leaden rings of their betrothal that the curé pronounced his blessing. "We have given our hearts to each other," said the young wife; "what do we want with gold rings after that? What do you think, George?"

"I mean to spend the money on a christening robe, then," said Father Rameau gaily. "Bless me, things'll have to be just so then, if ever they are! If you only knew what kind of a god-mother——"

But he stopped short just in time, remembering the fairy's injunction about silence; and Madeleine, whom he had made very inquisitive, could not get another word out of him. She never found out what he meant till her first baby was born, when on the day of the christening there stepped into the cottage, surrounded by a circle of bright light, the marvellous god-mother, the Fairy of the Moor.

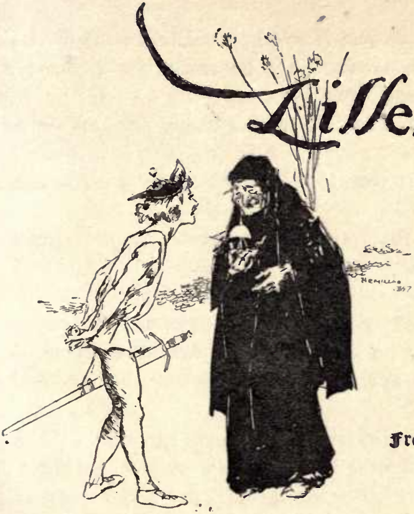


"THE FAIRY OF THE MOOR."

Many tried to follow Father Rameau's example and cultivate a portion of the moor; but very few succeeded, because the fairy could see into the very bottom of their hearts, and would only help the true-hearted—rare folk, alas! in this world. There is much left still to be cleared. And she yet lives on, the little fairy of the silvery tunic embroidered with gorse blossoms, with her crown of heather bells, and her wand a verdant broom branch. But if ever you want to see her, as old Father Rameau did, you must arrive at the Mid-day Rock on the first stroke of twelve, and have a conscience perfectly clear ; two conditions which seem easy enough, and which are really very difficult of fulfilment.

Lillekort.

Lillekort.



From the
French of Xavier
Marmier.

THERE was once a man and his wife who were very, very poor, and had a great many children. Each year added one to the number. One day the wife gave birth to a beautiful boy, who, on opening his eyes, cried:

"Dearest mother, give me some of my brother's old clothes, and food for two days, and I will go into the world and seek my fortune, for I see you have enough children here without me."

"Heaven forbid, my child!" exclaimed the mother. "You are much too young to leave the house."

But the little one insisted; so at length his mother gave him some clothes and some food, and he departed, full of joy. Lillekort (for so he named himself) travelled towards the east. Presently he met an old, one-eyed woman, and took away her eye.

"Alas!" she cried, "I can no longer see. What will become of me?"

"What will you give me for your eye?" asked Lillekort.

"A sword that will slay a whole army, no matter how numerous."

"So be it."

Lillekort took the sword and continued his journey. A little farther on he met another old, one-eyed woman, took away her eye, and asked what she would give him for returning it.

The old woman said she would give him a ship that would sail over land and sea, over mountains and valleys, and on his agreeing, she gave him a little ship so small and light that he could carry it about in his pocket.

As soon as he was quite alone Lillekort stopped to examine his little vessel. He drew it from his pocket and put one foot in it. Immediately it grew larger. He put in the second foot. It grew yet larger. He sat down in it. It inceased yet more. Then he said:

"Go over the waves of the ocean, over mountains and through valleys, until you reach the palace of the King."

The ship immediately sped through space with the rapidity of a bird, and stopped in front of a magnificent palace. From one of the windows of this palace several persons beheld, with astonishment and interest, this boy who travelled in a manner so strange, and they hastened out to obtain a nearer view of the wonder. But Lillekort had already put his ship in his pocket. They asked who he was and whence he came. To these different questions he knew not how to reply; but in a firm voice said he wished to enter the service of the King, no matter in what capacity; if need be, as a servant of the servants.

His humble request was granted. He was ordered to fetch wood and water for the kitchen. Arriving at the palace he saw with surprise that all the walls were hung with black, both without and within.

"Wherefore," he asked the cook, "this appearance of mourning?"

"Alas!" she replied, "the only daughter of our King has been promised to three trolls, enormous ogres, and Thursday next the first comes to claim her. A knight, whose name is Rend, has undertaken to defend her. But how should he succeed? In the meantime we are all plunged in anguish and affliction."

Thursday evening Rend led the Princess to the sea-shore. It was here he had to defend her. But he was not very brave, so instead of waiting near her he climbed a tree and hid among the branches. In vain the Princess begged him to assist her.

"No, no," said he; "why two victims? One is sufficient."

At that moment Lillekort asked the cook's permission to go to the sea-shore.

"Go," said she, "but be sure you return by the time I prepare supper, and do not forget to bring me a good load of wood."

Lillekort promised, and ran toward the beach. At the same time the troll appeared, making a noise like thunder. His body was of enormous dimensions and he had five frightful heads.

"Madman!" he cried, on seeing the little kitchen-boy.

"Madman!" repeated Lillekort.

"Do you know how to fight?"

"If I do not know I will learn."

The troll then threw a bar of iron at Lillekort, which, falling on the ground, raised a pile of sand and dust.

"A beautiful tower of strength," cried Lillekort. "Now, see mine."

With these words he drew his sword, and with one blow smote off the monster's five heads.

Finding herself delivered, the Princess began to dance and sing gaily, then she said to the young boy: "Rest, lay your head on my knees."

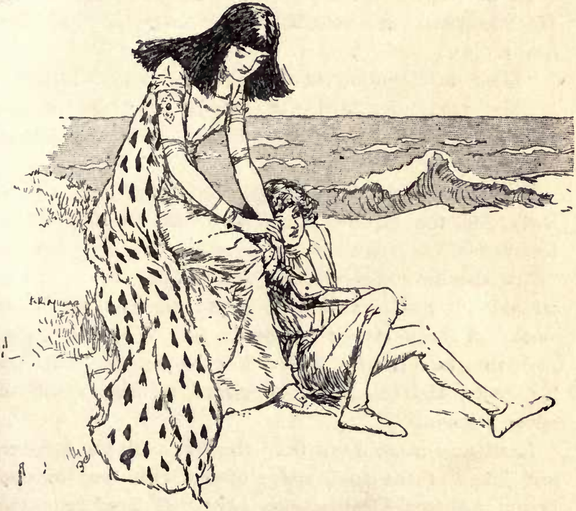
Whilst he thus rested she placed on him a suit of golden armour.

All danger being over, Rend came down from the tree, took the tongues and lungs of the monster, and then told the Princess he would kill her unless she promised to acknowledge him publicly as her deliverer. She yielded to his threats, and he returned with her in triumph to the palace. The King loaded him with honours, and at supper seated him at his right hand. Meanwhile, Lillekort entered the giant's ship, and brought from thence a quantity of gold and silver trinkets.

"From whence all these riches?" asked the cook anxiously, for she feared he had stolen them.

"Reassure yourself," he replied. "I went home for a moment; these trinkets fell from an old piece of furniture, so I brought them back for you."

"What beautiful things! A thousand thanks!"



"WHILST HE THUS RESTED SHE PLACED ON HIM A SUIT OF GOLDEN ARMOUR (*p.* 162).

The Thursday following, fresh grief, fresh anguish. However, Rend said as he had vanquished the first troll, he reckoned he could conquer the second. But this time also he took refuge among the branches of a tree, saying: "Why two victims? One is surely sufficient."

Lillekort again obtained the cook's permission to go out, he said to play with some children on the seashore; so he hastened forth, after promising to return by the time she prepared supper, and bring a good load of wood.

As he reached the shore he saw the troll approaching. He was twice as colossal as the first, and had ten heads.

"Madman!" exclaimed the troll, on seeing Lillekort.

"Madman!" repeated the valiant boy, and on the troll asking if he could fight, replied, as on the former occasion, that he could learn.

The giant then threw a bar of iron at him, which, falling on the ground, raised a column of dust thirty feet high.

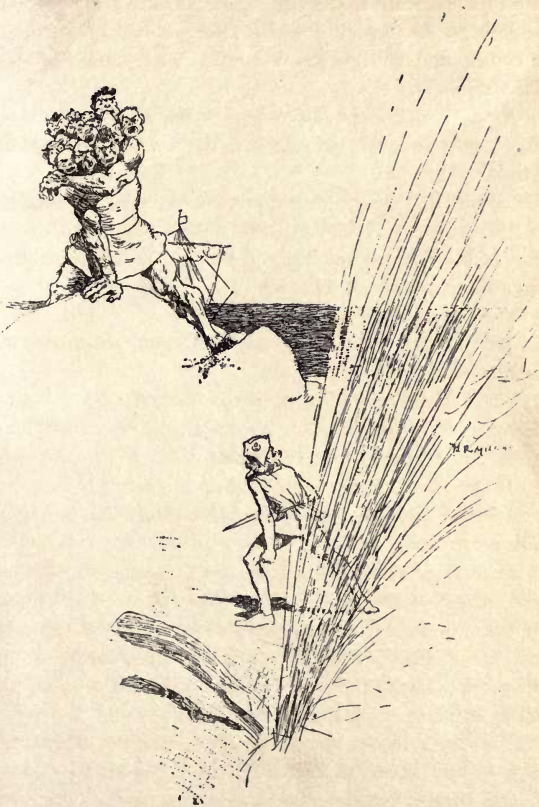
"A beautiful tower of strength," said the boy. "Now, see mine." And drawing his sword, he, with one blow, smote off the monster's ten heads.

Again the Princess desired him to rest his head on her knees, and this time she placed on him a suit of silver armour.

Rend now came down from the tree, took the tongues and lungs of the troll, and returned with the Princess in triumph to the palace, after having declared he would kill her if she did not acknowledge him publicly as her deliverer. The King received him with enthusiasm, and knew not how to show his gratitude.

Lillekort returned to the kitchen, carrying a quantity of gold and silver he had taken from the troll's ship.

The third Thursday, the palace was again hung with black, and the people were plunged in grief. But Rend said he had already conquered two formidable monsters



"HE HAD FIFTEEN HEADS" (*p.* 166).

and would overcome the third. But, as on the preceding Thursdays, he hid in the tree, and when the Princess implored him to remain with her, said one victim was sufficient.

Lillekort, who had again obtained the cook's permission to go out, reached the shore at the same time as the monster, who was much more terrible than either of the two former. He had fifteen heads, and the bar of iron he threw at his brave little adversary raised a column of earth forty feet high. Lillekort, however, with his magic sword, struck off the fifteen heads at one blow.

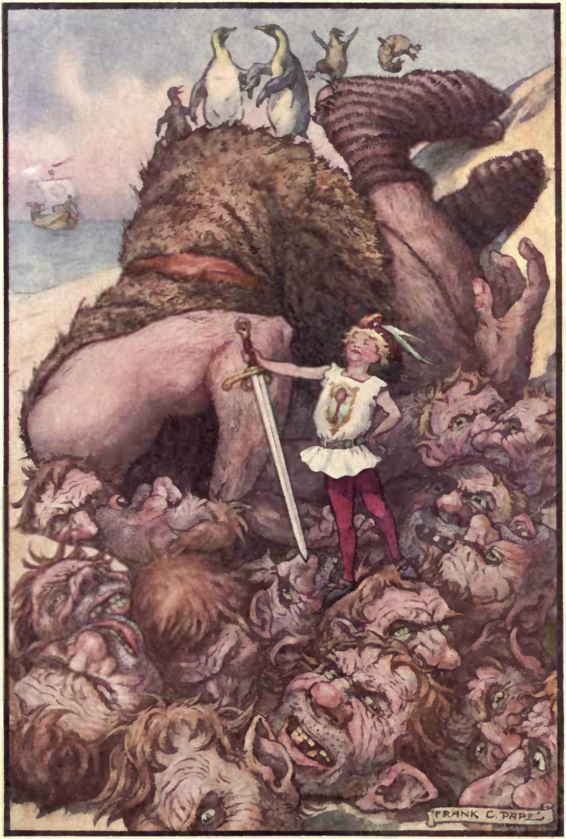
"Rest," said the Princess; "rest your head on my knees."

Whilst he thus rested, she put on him a suit of bronze armour, and said:

"How can we make it known that it is you who saved me?"

"Listen," replied Lillekort, "this is my idea. Rend will go without scruple to claim the reward promised to your deliverer: your hand and the half of your father's kingdom. When the day for your marriage arrives say you wish to be served at table by the boy who carries wood and water to the kitchen. I will let a few drops of wine fall on Rend's plate. He will strike me. A second and a third time I will do the same, and again he will strike me; then you shall say: 'For shame to strike him whom I love—he who saved me—he whom I should wed!'"

Seeing the troll was dead, Rend came down from the tree and led the Princess back to the palace, after


FRANK C. PAPE

"Lillekort with his magic sword struck off the fifteen heads at one blow."

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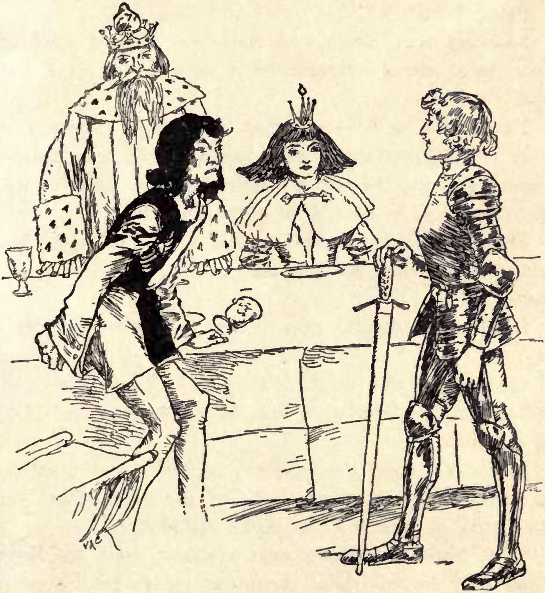
having made her swear a third time to proclaim him as her deliverer.

The King announced that his daughter's deliverer



"IN ARMOUR OF GLITTERING GOLD" (*p.* 168).

should receive in the most splendid manner the reward he had so well deserved. The cowardly knight was betrothed to the Princess, and half the kingdom was given him. The day of the Princess's marriage she would be served by the boy who carried wood and water to the kitchen.

"What!" exclaimed Rend, in disgust, "you wish that dirty, hideous little varlet to come near you?"

"Yes, I wish it."

Lillekort was summoned, and, as he had said, he once, twice, thrice let some drops of wine fall in Rend's plate.

The first time he was struck the coarse garments he wore fell off, and the valiant boy appeared in a suit of bronze armour, the second time in silver armour, and the third time in armour of glittering gold.

Then the Princess cried: "For shame to strike him whom I love—he who saved me—he whom I should wed!"

Rend swore loudly that it was he who had saved her.

"Let us see the proofs of the victors," said the King.

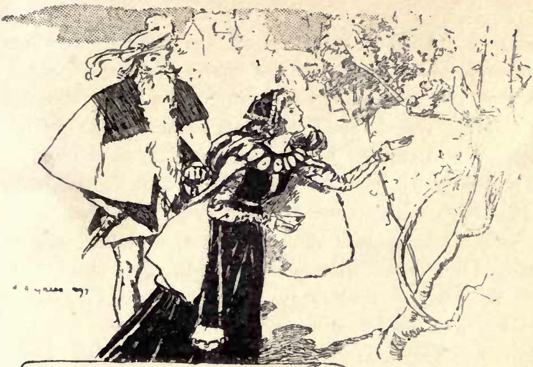
The knight immediately showed the tongues and lungs of the trolls.

Lillekort fetched the treasures he had taken from the monsters' ships. At the sight of the gold, silver, and diamonds, no one had the slightest doubt.

"The trolls alone have such treasures," said the King, "and only he who kills them can obtain possession of their riches."

Rend, the coward and impostor, was thrown into a ditch full of serpents, and the Princess's hand was given to Lillekort, together with half of the kingdom.

The Ten Little Fairies.



THE TEN LITTLE FAIRIES.

FROM THE FRENCH
OF GEORGES
MITCHELL

VAINLY I try to recall from my recollections of yesterday, still vividly remembered, and from those of the long past, grown tenderly dim in the mists of intervening time, from whom I learned the powerfully moral story I am here going to repeat to children great and small, to men and their companions: I cannot determine from whom it was I learned it.

Did I first read it in some old book laden with the dust of ages? Was it told to me by my mother, by my nurse, one evening when I would not go to sleep—or one night when, sleeping soundly, a fairy came and sang it to me in my slumber? I cannot tell. I cannot remember. I have forgotten all the details, of which there only remains with me the subtle perfume—too fine and evanescent for me to seize it in its passage through my mind. But I retain—perfectly retain—the moral, which is the daughter of all things healthy and strong.

The things which I am going to recount happened in a charming country—one of those bright lands which we see only in delightful dreams, where the men are all good and the women all as amiable as they are beautiful.

In that happy country there lived a great nobleman who, left a widower early in life, had an only daughter whom he loved more than anything in the whole world.

Rosebelle was seventeen years old—a pure marvel of grace and beauty; gay as a joyous heart, good as a happy one. For ten leagues round she was known to be the most beautiful and best. She was simple and gentle, and her exquisite ingenuousness caused her everywhere—in the mansion and the cottage—to be beloved.

Her father, fearful lest the least of the distresses of our poor existence should overtake her, watched over her with jealous care, so that no harm should come to her; while she passed her days in calmly thinking of the time before her, sure that it would not be other than delightful.

When she was eighteen, her father consented to her being betrothed to the son of a Prince—to Greatheart a handsome youth, who had been carefully reared, and detested the false excitements and factitious pleasures of cities loving enthusiastically the fresh charms of

Nature—of the common mother who claims us all, the Earth.

Rosebelle loved her *fiancé*, married, and adored him.

With him she went to live in the admirable calm of the country, in the midst of great trees that gave back the plaint of winds, by a river with its ever-flowing song, winding under willowy banks, and overshadowed by tall poplars.

She lived in a very old, old castle, where the sires of her husband had been born—a great castle reached by roads hewn out of the solid rock; a great castle, with immense, cold halls, where echo answered echo mysteriously; where the night-owl drearily replied to the early thrush's song to the rising sun, and the other awakened birds singing and chirping on the borders of the deep woods, where the sun enters timidly—almost with the hesitation of a trespasser.

When the time for parting came, her father had said to her, through his tears:

"You are going from me—your happiness claims that I should let you go: go, therefore, but take all care of yourself for love of me, who have only you in the world to love."

To his son-in-law he said:

"Watch over her, I intrust her to you. Surround her with a thousand safeguards; screen her from the least chance of harm or pain. Remember that even in stooping to pluck a flower she may fall and wound herself, that in gathering a fruit she may tear her hand. See that all is done for her that can be done, keep her for me ever beautiful."

Absorbed in her love for her husband, Rosebelle realised the sweet dreams of her young girlhood. Then she dreamed—languorously—Heaven knows what! The delightful future which she had seen in the visions of the past was still present with her, however.

Her husband, tender and good, wished that she should do nothing but live and love. He had surrounded her with numerous servants, all ready to obey the least of her desires, the slightest of her fancies, to comprehend the most trivial of her wants. She had nothing to do but to let time glide slowly by her.

At length she wearied—languished mysteriously.

Her father, to whom she communicated this strange experience, was astounded. He reminded her of all the sources of happiness which ought to have existed in her case. He took her in his arms and said all he could think of in laudation of the husband who so greatly loved her; gave her innumerable reasons why her happiness ought to have been unparalleled; offered money—more money—wishful to give all the felicities in the world.

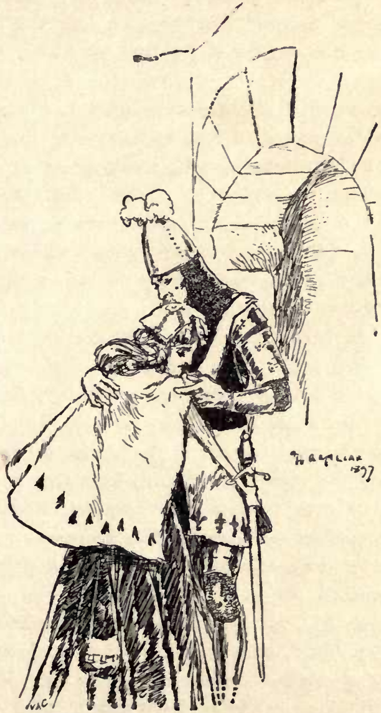
She wished for nothing of all that; it only tired, enervated her.

He besought her to be happy; she replied:

"I wish I could be so, for your sake and for that of my husband, whom I love so dearly."

And she struggled against the strange evil which so weighed upon her, against the deadly *ennui* that was sapping her young life. But the mysterious ill which tormented her soul grew and grew until it became overwhelming.

Greatheart speedily detected her distress, and sought to discover its cause, but ineffectually; and from alarm he passed into despair.



"SHE VOWED FOR HIM A BOUNDLESS LOVE" (*p.* 176).

Now, when he returned from the plain, the fields, or the camp, when he embraced her he pressed against his bosom a bosom cold and filled with sadness and tears—a bosom so cold that it might have been thought to contain a block of ice in place of a heart—and he redoubled his tenderness towards her. Seeing how much he was suffering on her account, she vowed for him a boundless love.

Courageous, energetic even, she tried to shake off the languor which possessed her, endeavouring to intoxicate her soul and drown her self-consciousness in the love of her adored husband; but all her efforts were made in vain; she became more and more oppressed with weariness, and the crowd of servants about her, all eager to realise her wishes, were utterly unable to mitigate her condition by anything they could do.

At last she fell into a state of the deepest melancholy. The rose-tints faded from her cheeks, her beauty paled like that of a languishing flower; the light in her eyes grew each day more dim. She was very ill.

The most learned doctors in the healing art were called to her, brought, regardless of cost, from the most distant countries, only to confess their complete inability; excusing themselves by affirming that there was no remedy for an indefinable ailment—an ailment impalpable, incomprehensible.

Then, one day, an old, white-haired shepherd, with a long, snowy beard, who had learned to understand men from having always lived alone with his sheep and thinking, thinking, while he led them to their pasture—an old philosopher—came to Greatheart, of whom he was one of the vassals, and said to him:

"I know where there lives, close by here, an old grand-dame, with one foot in the grave, she is so old People call her a sorceress; but never mind that; she, and she alone, can cure our lady, our mistress, whom you love so well."

Knowing not what to do in his suffering, Greatheart believed what the old shepherd told him.

He took Rosebelle far away from the castle along the bank of the river, to a spot where the path ran between high rocks, leading to a deep and profoundly dark cavity, within which they found the old, old woman of whom the shepherd had spoken, crouching by the side of a scanty fire of pine-branches, warming herself in their fitful light, in the midst of owls and ravens, cats and rats with phosphorescent eyes, showing green in the obscurity when lit by the intermittent sparkle of the crackling branches on the hearth.

"Ho, there! sorceress!" cried the young Prince. "Cure my wife, and I will give you the half of all I possess!"

The very old woman looked for a long time at Rosebelle out of her little bright eyes, meeting those of the young Princess, and holding her as if by a spell. For awhile longer she remained silent, as if in contemplation; then, suddenly, she rose to her feet, raised her long arms towards the herbs suspended from the rocky roof of her dwelling-place, spread out her fleshless fingers and cried:

"I see! I see! I understand it all! Yes, my lord, I will cure your wife, your adored one; and presently in your arms, on your heart, shall sleep a heart beating with great joy for love of you!"

As they both sprang nearer to her, the better to hear her wonderful words, the old woman retreated, saying:

"Yes, I will cure her; but to aid me in the task, I need the assistance of ten little fairies—ten friends who have ever been dear to me, ever faithful to me, and who, by an unfortunate chance, have not visited me to-day. To-morrow I shall be sure to have them with me, my tiny comrades; so come back to me to-morrow, my dear, when I will detain them until you arrive, and will take measures for enabling them to cure you."

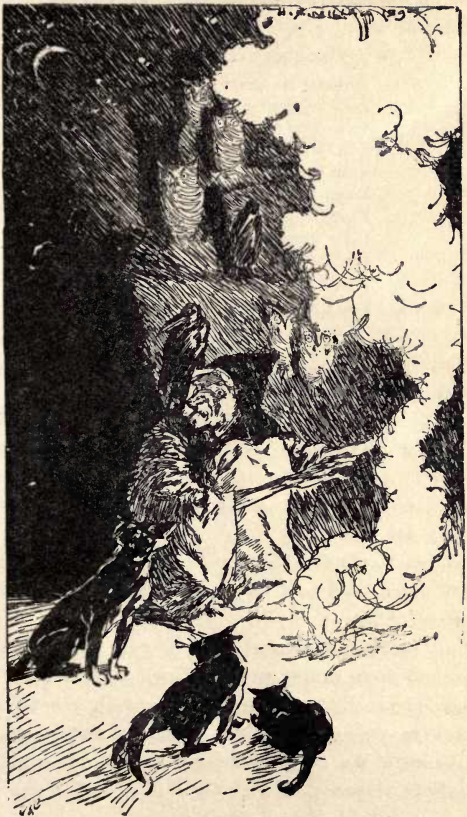
The sun, next day, had hardly risen, hardly caressed the earth with its earliest beam, when Rosebelle re-entered the old sorceress's murky dwelling-place.

Over the still crackling fire of pine-branches she extended her white hands by direction of the old woman, who raised her arms and uttered some curious words, accompanied by some strange gestures.

Then, from a small cavity in the rocky wall she appeared to draw forth an invisible something, which she carefully conveyed to the shelter of her bare bosom. And when she had repeated these actions ten times, she cried:

"I have them!—I have them all!—all warm in my bosom—my faithful little fairies! Oh!—do not attempt to see them, or they will at once fly away. They desire to serve you—to cure you. Here they are!"

And laughing, dancing, and singing, the old, old woman tapped with the crooked thumb of her right hand the young Princess's ten extended fingers, while the quaint song she sang was gaily given back by the echo of the rocky vault above her. This was the song she sang,



THE SORCERESS.

holding the Princess's delicate fingers caressingly in her left hand :—

"Ten good little fairies hie,
To these ten good fingers nigh:
Each of you reside in one
Until your kindly task is done,
Until by certain signs you're sure
That you have made a perfect cure.
Potent fairies, from this hour
Exercise your utmost pow'r;
Drive away the evil spell
Cast on one who ll love you well!"

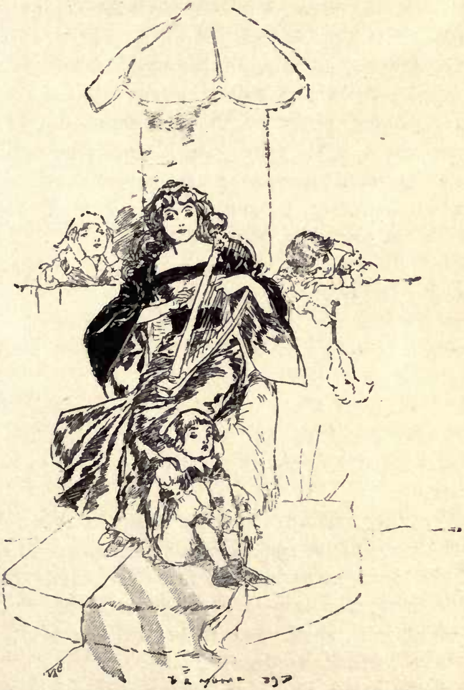
Then, still laughing heartily, she pressed Rosebelle's, fingers tightly, and went on:

"They are all here, the wonderful little doctors! Guard them preciously; do not weary them; keep them by you and, to do all that, never give them a moment's rest so long as the sun shines in the sky. Keep on moving them—actively, rapidly—so long as you are awake. Now go, and come back to me when you are quite cured, returning me my trusty little fairies."

With her hands filled with this precious load, Rosebelle hurried home, and told Greatheart of her dear hope of a renewal of life.

Of an evening, thenceforth, for a long time, she would even refrain from eating, so as to leave herself more time to exercise her unresting fingers, in which the ten little fairies were tenderly housed. As soon as the sun had sunk beneath the earth she went to sleep, and as soon as daylight returned, she at once rose and began once again to move her fairy-laden fingers.

During many, many days she continued to move her fingers in every way she could devise; but at length, growing tired of this useless play, she went back to her old friend the sorceress.



"ROSEBELLE DREW HER HARP FROM ITS CASE AND PLAYED ON IT" (*p.* 182).

"Nobody ever taught you to use your fingers usefully?" replied the old woman. "Go on moving them, still moving them, but in some employment that interests you. Don't let my fairies go to sleep—that is all they desire in their imprisonment."

On returning home, Rosebelle drew her long-neglected harp from its case and played on it. Then, to occupy her fingers more usefully, she had needles brought to her and employed them in dainty sewing.

But, growing weary of the dull monotony of these labours, she sought more varied employment for her fingers—gathered flowers in the garden and arranged them in charming bouquets; plucked fruit from the trees in the orchard; attended to the sick and ailing; consoled the poor—exercising her fingers constantly by slipping gold pieces into their grateful hands.

One by one, she sent away her crowd of obsequious servants, who had now nothing left for them to do but to go to sleep at their posts.

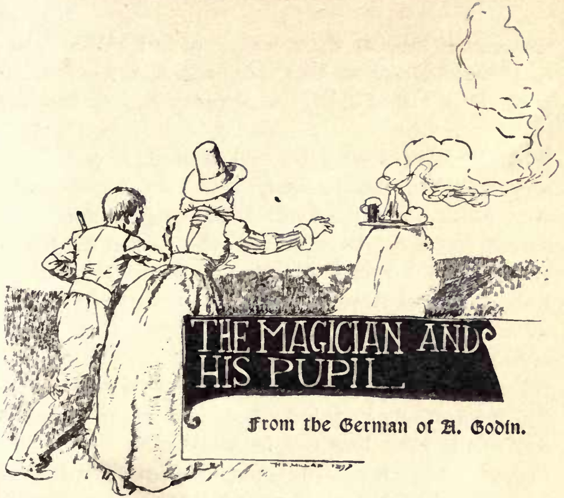
She would not allow anybody to do anything for her which she could do for herself, but threw her whole soul and being into the things God intended to be done by them.

Every day, and all the while the sun shone in the sky, she found active employment for her beautiful fingers. And the roses came back to her cheeks and health to all her being, and songs and laughter to her lips; and she could, once again, give to her beloved one a heart filled with ineffable tenderness.

Perfectly cured, she went to the sorceress and gave her back her wonderful little fairy doctors.

"Ah, my child!" said the old dame, "they are very proud of having saved you. Give them to me, for I have every day great need of them—can never have too much of them. Indeed, if I had enough of them to serve all the idlers in the world, I should want as many as there are stars in the heavens at night. But I will keep those I have for the service of those who are pining from *ennui*—and there are enough of *them*, goodness knows!"

The Magician and his Pupil.



THE MAGICIAN AND HIS PUPIL

From the German of A. Godin.

THERE was once a poor shoemaker renowned far and wide as a drunkard. He had a good wife and many daughters, but only one son. As soon as this son was old enough his mother dressed him in his best clothes, combed his hair until it shone, and then led him far, far away; for she wished to take him to the capital, and there apprentice him to a master who would teach him a really good trade.

When they had accomplished about half their journey they met a man in black, who asked whither they were going and the object of their journey. On being told, he offered to take the boy as his apprentice, but as he had not given the customary Christian greeting, and would not mention the name of his trade, also because the mother thought there was a wicked gleam in his eyes, she declined to trust him with her son. As he persisted in his offer they were rude, then he troubled them no further.

Shortly after leaving the old man they came to a wide stretch of land, solitary and barren as a desert, over which they journeyed until hunger, thirst, and fatigue compelled them to rest. Exhausted, they sank on the sandy ground and wept bitterly. Suddenly, at a short distance from them arose a large stone, on whose surface stood a dish of smoking roast beef, a loaf of white bread, and a jug of foaming ale.

Eagerly the weary travellers hastened forward. Alas! the moment they moved, meat and drink vanished, leaving the stone bare and barren; but as soon as they stepped back, the food again made its appearance. After this had happened several times the shoemaker's son guessed what was at the bottom of it. Pointing his stick of aspen wood—a wood, by the way, very powerful against enchantment—he cautiously approached the stone, and thrust his stick into that place on the earth where the shadow of the stone rested.

Immediately the stone with everything on it disappeared, and in the place where the shadow had lain stood the stranger in black who had met them earlier in the day. He bowed politely to the youth and requested him to remove his stick.

"No, that I will not do! This time the stone has met its match! You are a magician, or at least a necromancer. You locked us in this desert and amused yourself with our misery. Now you shall be treated as you deserve. You shall stand here for a year and six weeks, until you are as dry as the stick with which I have nailed you to the earth."

"Loose me, I entreat you."

"Yes, on certain conditions! First, you must once more become a stone, and on the stone must appear everything we have already seen."

The magician immediately vanished, and in his stead appeared the stone covered with a white cloth, and bearing the hot roast beef, white bread, and foaming ale, of which the travellers ate and drank to their hearts' content. When they had finished the stone became the man in black, who entreated piteously to be unnailed.

"I will unnail you directly," said the youth, "but only on one condition. You must take me as apprentice for three years, as you yourself formerly proposed, and give me a pledge that you will really teach me all your art."

The magician bowed himself to the earth, dug his fingers into the sand, and drew forth a handful of ducats, which he threw into the boy's cap.

"Thanks," replied the youth; "this money will be very useful to my mother, but you must give me a better pledge than that. I must have a piece of your ear."

"Will nothing else serve?"

"Nothing!"

"Well, then," said the magician, "take your knife."

"I have no knife with me," replied the youth; "you must lend me yours."

The magician obediently lent his knife, and bent his right ear towards the youth.

"No, no, I want the left ear; you offer the right far too willingly."

The magician then offered his left ear; and the youth cut off a slant piece, laid it in his wallet, and then drew his stick out of the ground. The magician groaned, rubbed his mutilated ear, then, turning a somersault, changed himself into a black cock, ordered the youth to take his mother back, and return at midnight and await his arrival at the cross-road where they now stood, when he would take him home and teach him for three years. The cock then flapped his wings, changed into a magpie, and flew away.

When the youth had accompanied his mother to the next village he kissed her hands and feet, shook the gold into her apron, and begged her to call for him in three years at the place where he had made his agreement with the magician. He then hastened back and reached the cross-road just at midnight.

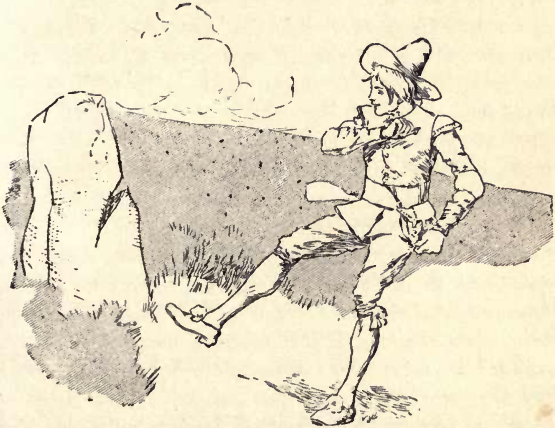
Being very tired he leaned against the mile-stone to await the arrival of his master. He waited long, then as no one came, he drew the piece of the magician's ear from his wallet and bit it hard. At this the mile-stone staggered, cracked, and roared. The youth sprang quickly aside, looked at the inscription, and cried: "Ho! ho! Is that you, master?"

"Of course, it is! But why did you bite me?" asked the magician.

"Take human form instantly!" replied the youth.

"I have done so!" With this the man in black stood on the cross-road. "Now we will go home," said he. "I take you as my pupil, but remember, from this moment you remain my pupil and servant, until, the three years ended, your mother fetches you away."

Thus the youth became the magician's pupil. You wish to know how he taught him his art? Well, so



"THE MILE-STONE STAGGERED, CRACKED, AND ROARED" (*p.* 190.)

be it. He stretched his hands and feet, turned him into a paper bag, and then left him to return to his proper shape as best he could. Or else, he thrust his hand and arm up to the shoulder down the youth's throat, turned him inside out, and left him to turn himself right.

The youth learnt so well, that at the end of the three years his skill in magic surpassed even that of his master. During this time many parents had come to fetch their children, for the magician had quite a crowd of pupils; but the cunning old man always contrived that they went away without them. Three days before the time appointed for the shoemaker's wife to fetch her son, the youth met her on the road and told her how to recognise him.

"Remember, dearest mother," said he, "when the magician calls his horses together, a fly will buzz over my ear; when the doves fly down, I shall not eat of the peas; and when the maidens stand around you, a brown mole will make its appearance above my eyebrow! Be sure you remember this, or you will destroy us both."

When the shoemaker's wife demanded her son of the magician, he blew a brazen trumpet towards all four corners of the world. Immediately a crowd of coal-black horses rushed forward; they were not, however, real horses, but enchanted scholars.

"Find your son—then you can take him with you!" said the magician.

The mother went from horse to horse, trying hard to recognise her son; she trembled at the mere thought that she might make a mistake, and thus destroy both herself and her beloved child. At length she noted a fly buzzing over the ear of one of the horses, and cried joyfully: "That is my son!"

"Right," said the magician; "now guess again." So saying he blew a silver trumpet towards the corners of the earth, and threw on the ground half a bushel of peas. Then like some vast cloud down flew a flock of doves, and began eagerly picking up the peas. The shoemaker's wife looked at dove after dove, until she found one that only appeared to eat. "That is my son!" said she.

"Right again! Now comes the third and last trial. Guess right, and your son goes with you; guess wrong, and he remains with me for ever." The magician then blew his trumpet, and immediately beautiful songs resounded through the air. At the same time lovely maidens approached and surrounded the shoemaker's wife. They were all crowned with cornflowers, and wore white robes with rose-coloured girdles.

The shoemaker's wife examined each carefully, and saw a brown mole over the right eye of the most beautiful. "This is my son!" she exclaimed.

Scarcely had she spoken than the maiden changed into her son, threw himself into her arms, and thanked her for his deliverance. The other maidens flew away, and the mother and son returned home.

The student of magic had not been long at home before he discovered that in his father's house Want was a constant guest. The money given by the magician had long since come to an end, for the shoemaker had spent it all in drink.

"What have you learnt in foreign parts?" he asked his son. "What help am I to expect from you."

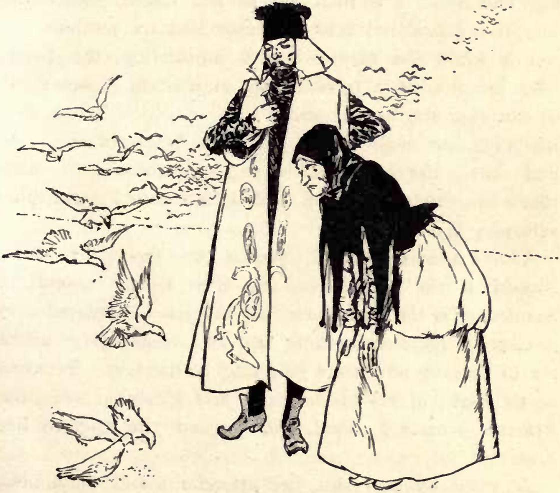
"I have learned magic, and will give you help enough. I can at your wish change myself into all possible shapes, to-day into a falcon, to-morrow into a greyhound, a nightingale, a sheep, or any other form. Lead me as an animal to market, and there sell me, but be sure always to bring back the rope with which you led me thither, and never desire me to become a horse: the money thus acquired would be useless to you, and you would make me, and through me yourself, unhappy."

Thereupon the shoemaker demanded a falcon for sale; his son at once disappeared, and a splendid falcon sat on the father's shoulder. The shoemaker took the bird to market, where he sold it to a hunter for a good price, but on returning home, he found his son seated at the table enjoying a good dinner.

When the money thus gained had been spent to the last farthing, the shoemaker required a greyhound, which he again sold to a hunter, and on his return home found his son had arrived there before him.

Thus the father led his son to market again and again, as an ox, a cow, a sheep, a goose, a turkey, and in many other animal forms. One day he thought: "I should very much like to know why my son does not wish to become a horse! Surely he takes me for a fool, and grudges me the best prize!" He was half drunk when he thought this, and then and there desired his son to become a horse. Hardly had he spoken than his wish was gratified: a splendid horse stood before the window; he dug his hoofs deep into the ground, whilst his eyes shot forth lightning, and flames issued from his nostrils.

The shoemaker mounted and rode into the town. Here a merchant stopped him, admired the horse, and offered to give the animal's weight in gold if his master would only sell him. They went together to a pair of scales: the merchant shook gold from a sack on one of the wooden scales, whilst the shoemaker made his horse mount on the other. As he was staring in amazement at the heap of gold in the scales, one of the chains broke, and the gold pieces rolled over the street.



"THE SHOEMAKER'S WIFE LOOKED AT DOVE AFTER DOVE" (*p.* 193).

The shoemaker threw himself on the ground to pick them up, and forgot both the horse and bridle.

The merchant meanwhile mounted the horse, and galloped out of the town, digging his spurs into the poor animal's sides until the blood flowed, and beating him cruelly with a steel riding-whip; for this merchant was none other than the magician, who thus revenged himself for the piece cut from his ear.

The poor horse was quite exhausted when the magician arrived with him at his invisible dwelling; this house, it is true, stood in an open field, yet no one could see it. The horse was then led to the stable, whilst the magician considered how he might best torture him.

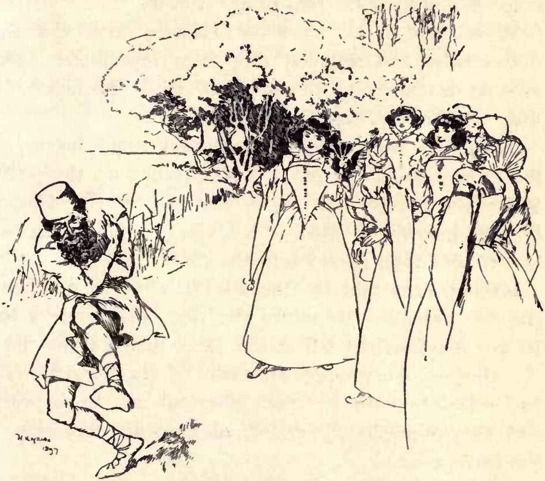
But while the magician was considering, the horse, who knew what a terrible fate awaited him, succeeded in throwing the bridle over a nail, on which it remained hanging, thus enabling him to draw his head out. He fled across the field, and changing into a gold ring, threw himself before the feet of a beauteous Princess just returning from bathing.

The Princess stooped, picked up the gold circle, slipped it on her finger, and then looked around in wonder. In the meantime, the magician—changed into a Grecian merchant—came up and courteously asked the Princess to return the gold ring he had lost. Terrified at the sight of his black beard and gleaming eyes, the Princess screamed aloud, and pressed the ring to her breast.

Alarmed by her cries, her attendants and playmates, who were waiting near, hastened up and formed a circle round their beloved Princess. But as soon as they understood the cause of her distress, they threw themselves on the importunate stranger, and began tickling him in such a manner that he laughed, cried, giggled, coughed, and at length danced over the ground like a maniac, forgetting through sheer distress that he was still a magician.

When, however, he did remember it, he changed himself into a hedgehog, and stuck his bristles into the maidens until their blood flowed, and they were glad to leave him alone.

Meanwhile the Princess hastened home and showed her father the ring, which pleased her so much that she wore it on her heart-finger night and day. Once when playing with it, the ring slipped from her hand, fell to the ground and sprang in pieces, when, oh, wonder! before her stood a handsome youth, the magician's pupil.



"HE DANCED OVER THE GROUND LIKE A MANIAC" (*p.* 196).

At first the Princess was very troubled, and did not venture to raise her eyes, but when the scholar had told her everything she was satisfied, conversed with him a long while, and promised to ask her father to have the magician driven away by the dogs should he ever come to demand the ring. When in the course of the day the magician came, the King, in spite of all his daughter's entreaties, ordered the ring to be given up.

With tears in her eyes the Princess took the ring (the scholar had resumed this form immediately after relating his adventures) and threw it at the merchant's feet. It shivered into little pearls.

Trembling with rage, the merchant threw himself on the ground in the shape of a hen, picked up the pearls, and when he saw no more, flew out of the window, flapped his wings, cried, "Kikeriki! Scholar, are you here?" and then soared into the air.

Having been told by the scholar what to do should she be compelled to return the ring, the Princess had let her handkerchief fall at the same moment she threw the ring on the ground, and two of the largest pearls had rolled beneath it. She now took out these pearls, and they immediately called, in mocking imitation of the hen's voice:

"Kikeriki! I am here!"

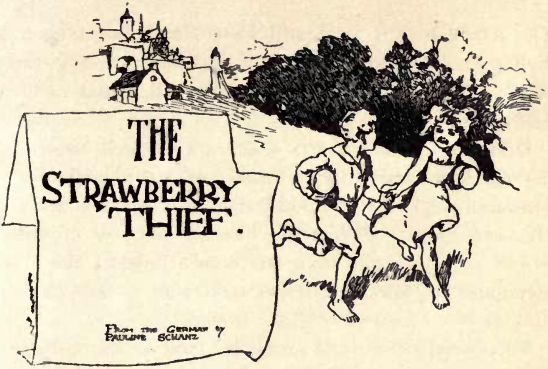
They then changed into a hawk and chased after the hen. Seizing it with his sharp talons, he bit its left wing with such force that all the feathers cracked, and the hen fell like a stone into the water, where it was drowned.

The hawk then returned to the Princess, perched on her shoulder, gazed fondly into her eyes, and then became once more the young and handsome scholar.

The Princess had grown so fond of him that she chose him as her husband, and from that moment he gave up magic for ever. In his prosperity he did not forget his relations—his mother lived with him and the Princess in their magnificent palace, his sisters married wealthy merchants, and even his father was content.

When the old King died the magician's pupil became King over the land, and lived so happily with his wife and children, and all his subjects, that no pen can write, no song sing, and no story tell of half their happiness.

The Strawberry Thief.



THE STRAWBERRY THIEF.

FROM THE GERMAN OF PAULINE SCHANZ

THE mid-day sun was shining brightly as two children ran merrily down the steep grassy slope leading from the little village to the neighbouring forest. Their loose, scanty clothing left head, neck, and feet bare. But this did not trouble them, for the sun's rays kissed their little round limbs, and the children liked to feel their warm kisses.

They were brother and sister; each carried a small jar to fill with strawberries, which their mother would sell in the town on the morrow. They were very poor, almost the poorest people in the village. Their mother, a widow, had to work hard to procure bread for herself and children.

When strawberries or nuts were in season, or even the early violets, the children went into the forest to seek them, and by the fruit or flowers they gathered helped to earn many a groschen. The happy children ran joyously along as though they were the rulers of the beautiful world that stretched so seductively before them.

The forest berries were still scarce, and would fetch a high price in the town; this is why they started so early in the afternoon, whilst other people still rested in their cool rooms.

Deep in the forest was many a spot, well known to the children, where large masses of strawberry plants flourished and bloomed, covering the ground with a luxurious carpet. White star-like blossoms in profusion looked roguishly out from the ample foliage; the little green and bright-red berries were there in crowds, but the ripe, dark-red fruit was difficult to find.

Very slowly the work proceeded, and as the gathered treasures in their small jars grew higher and higher the sun sank lower and lower. Busy with their task, the children forgot laughter and chattering; they tasted none of the lovely berries, scarcely looked at the violets and anemones; the sun's rays peeping through the branches the cock-chafers and butterflies were alike unheeded.

"Lorchen," cried Fried, at length, throwing back his sunburnt, heated face; "look, Lorchen, my jar is full!"

Lorchen looked up, her face flushed with toil; her poor little jar was scarcely half-full. Oh, how she envied her brother his full jar! Fried was a good boy—he loved his little sister dearly. He made her sit down on the soft grass, placed his jar beside her, and did not cease his work until Lorchen's jar was likewise filled. Their day's work was now ended. But it was so beautiful in the forest. The birds sang so joyfully among the leaves, everything exhaled the fragrance of the dewy evening that crept slowly between the trembling branches.

At a little distance a small stretch of meadow shimmered through the trees. The bright sunshine still rested on the fresh, green grass, and thousands of daffodils, bluebells, pinks, and forget-me-nots unfolded there their varied beauties. It was a delightful play-place for the children. They hastened thither, placed their jars carefully behind a large tree-trunk, and soon forgot their hard afternoon's work in a merry game. Greyer grew the shadows, closer the dusk of evening veiled the lonely forest. Then the brother and sister thought of returning—the rest had strengthened their weary limbs, and their game in the flowery meadow had made them cheerful and merry.

Now the dew that wetted their bare feet, and hunger that began to make itself felt, urged them to return home. They ran to the tree behind which they had placed their jars, but oh, horror! the jars had vanished. At first the children thought they had mistaken the place; they searched farther, behind every trunk, behind every bush, but no trace of the jars could they find.

They had vanished, together with the precious fruit. What would their mother say when they returned home, their task unfulfilled? With the price of the berries she intended to buy meal to make bread. They had been almost without bread for several days, and now they had not even the jars in which to gather other berries.

Lorchen began to sob loudly; Fried's face grew crimson with rage, and his eyes sparkled, he did not weep. The darkness increased, the tree-trunks looked black and spectral, the wind rustled in the branches. Who could have stolen their berries? No one had come near the meadow. Squirrels and lizards could not carry away jars. The poor children stood helpless beside the old tree-trunk. They could not return to their mother empty-handed; they feared she would reproach them for losing sight of their jars.

The little maiden shivered in her thin frock, and wept with fear, hunger, and fatigue. Fried took his little sister's hand, and said: "Listen, Lorchen: you must run home, it is night now in the forest. Tell mother our jars have disappeared, eat your supper, and go to bed and to sleep. I will remain here and search behind every tree and everywhere, until I find the jars. I am neither hungry nor tired, and am not afraid to pass the night alone in the forest, in spite of all the stories our grandmother used to tell of wicked spirits in the forest, hobgoblins who tease children, will-o'-the-wisps, and mountain-demons who store their treasures beneath the earth."

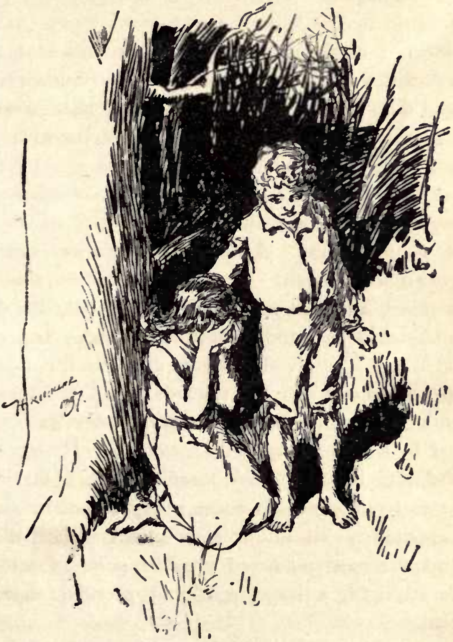
Lorchen shuddered and looked fearfully around—she was a timid, weakly child. Wrapping her little arms in her apron, she wept bitterly.

"Come home with me, Fried," she pleaded. "I am afraid to go through the gloomy forest alone!"

Fried took her hand and went with her until they saw the lights of the village. Then he stopped and said: "Now run along alone; see, there is the light burning in our mother's window. I shall turn back, I cannot go home empty-handed."

He turned quickly into the forest. Lorchen waited a moment, and cried, "Fried, Fried!" Then, receiving no answer, she fled swiftly up the grassy slope she had descended so merrily a few hours previously.

Their mother, who had grown uneasy at their prolonged absence, was standing at the door when Lorchen returned, weeping and breathless. Poor child, she had scarcely strength enough left to tell that they had lost strawberries and jars, and that Fried had remained behind.



"LORCHEN BEGAN TO SOB" (*p.* 205).

The mother grew sad as she listened—she had scarcely any bread left, and knew not whence to procure more;

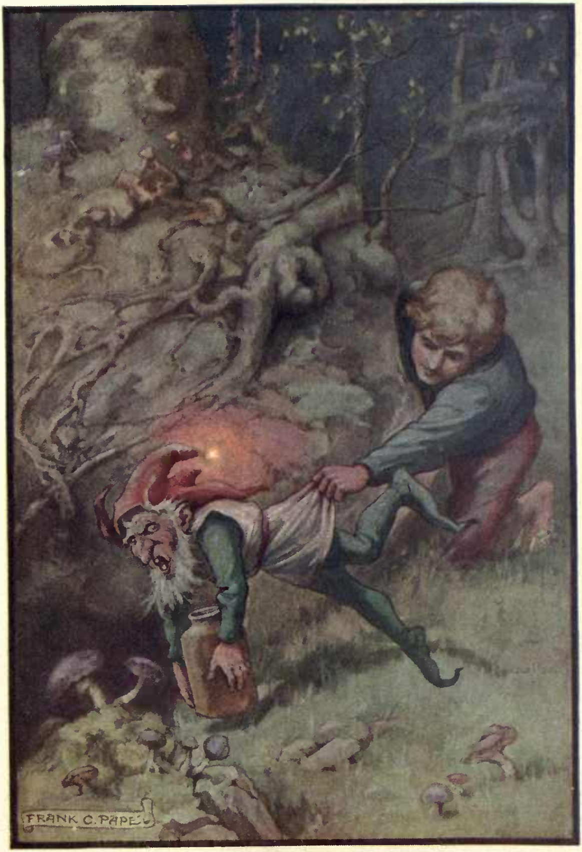
but Fried remaining in the forest was worse than all, for she, like all the villagers, firmly believed in hobgoblins. Sadly she lay down to rest beside her little daughter.

Fried ran ever farther and farther into the forest, through whose thick foliage the stars looked down timidly. He said his evening prayer, and no longer feared the rustling of the leaves, the cracking of the branches, or the whisper of the night wind in the trees.

Soon the moon arose, and it was light enough for Fried to seek his jars. In vain his search—the hours passed and he found nothing. At length he saw a small mountain overgrown with shrubs. Then the moon crept behind a thick cloud, and all was dark. Tired out, Fried sank down behind a tree and almost fell asleep. Suddenly he saw a bright light moving about close to the mountain, He sprang up and hastened towards it.

Coming closer, he heard a peculiar noise, as of groans uttered by a man engaged in heavy toil. He crept softly forward, and beheld, to his astonishment, a little dwarf, who was trying to push some heavy object into a hole, that apparently led into the mountain. The little man wore a silver coat and a red cap with points, to which the wonderful light, a large, sparkling precious stone, was fastened.

Fried soon stood close behind the dwarf, who in his eagerness had not observed the boy's approach, and saw with indignation that the object the little man was striving so hard to push into the hole was his jar of strawberries. In great wrath Fried seized a branch that lay near, and gave the little man a mighty blow. Thereupon the dwarf


FRANK C. PAPE

" But Fried held him fast."

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uttered a cry very like the squeak of a small mouse, and tried to creep into the hole.

But Fried held him fast by his silver coat, and angrily demanded where he had put his other jar of strawberries. The dwarf replied he had no other jar, and strove to free himself from the grasp of the little giant.

Fried again seized his branch, which so terrified the dwarf that he cried: "The other jar is inside; I will fetch it for you."

"I should wait a long time," said Fried, "if I once let you escape; no, I will go with you and fetch my own jar."

The dwarf stepped forward, the light in his cap shining brighter than the brightest candle. Fried followed, his jar in one hand, and the branch in the other. Thus they journeyed far into the mountain. The dwarf crept along like a lizard, but Fried, whose head almost touched the roof, could scarcely get along.

At length strains of lovely music resounded through the vaulted passages: a little farther on their journey was stopped by a grey stone wall. Taking a silver hammer from his doublet, the little dwarf gave three sounding knocks on the wall; it sprang asunder, and as it opened such a flood of light streamed forth that Fried was obliged to close his eyes. Half-blinded, with hand shading his face, he followed the dwarf, the stone door closed behind them, and Fried was in the secret dwellings of the gnomes.

A murmur of soft voices, mingled with the sweet strains of the music, sounded in his ears. When at length he was able to remove his hand from his eyes, he saw a wondrous sight. A beauteous, lofty hall, hewn out of the rock, lay before him; on the walls sparkled thousands of precious stones such as his guide had worn in his cap. They served instead of candles, and shed forth a radiance that almost blinded human eyes.

Between them hung wreaths and sprays of flowers such as Fried had never before seen. All around crowds of wonderful little dwarfs stood gazing at him full of curiosity.

In the centre of the hall stood a throne of green transparent stone, with cushions of soft mushrooms. On this sat the gnome-King; around him was thrown a golden mantle, and on his head was a crown cut from a flaming carbuncle. Before the throne the dwarf, Fried's guide, stood relating his adventure.

When the dwarf ceased speaking, the King rose, approached the boy, who still stood by the door, surrounded by the gnomes, and said: "You human child, what has brought you to my secret dwelling?"

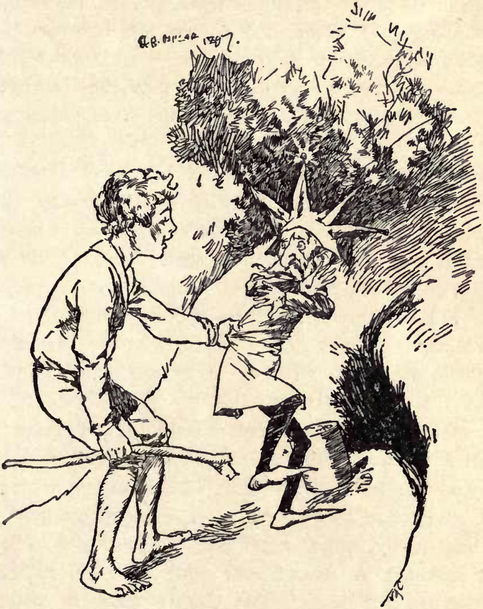
"My Lord Dwarf," replied Fried politely, "I desire my strawberries which yonder dwarf has stolen. I pray you order them to be restored to me, and then suffer me to return to my mother."

The King thought for a few moments, then he said: "Listen, to-day we hold a great feast, for which your strawberries are necessary. I will, therefore, buy them. I will also allow you to remain with us a short time, then my servants shall lead you back to the entrance of the mountain."

"Have you money to buy my strawberries?" asked the boy.

Foolish child, know you not that the gold, silver, and copper come out of the earth? Come with me and see my treasure-chambers."

So saying, the King led him from the hall through long


G.B. MILLAR 1897.

"I WILL GO WITH YOU" (*p.* 209).

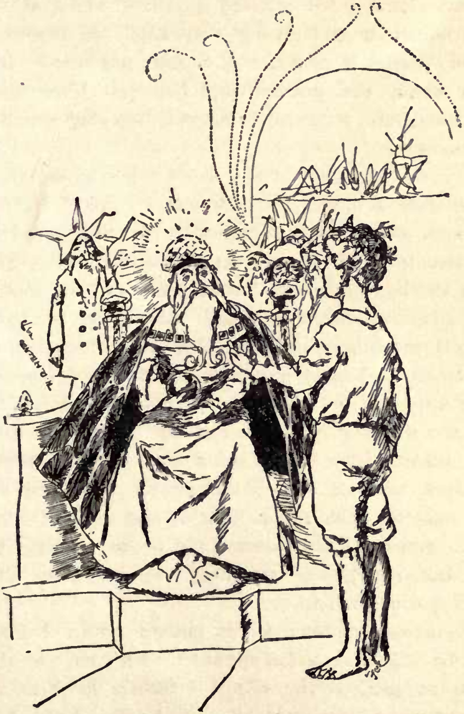
rooms, in which mountains of gold, silver, and copper were piled; in other rooms lay like masses of precious stones. Presently they came to a grotto, in the centre of which stood a large vase. From out this vase poured three sparkling streams, each of a different colour: they flowed out of the grotto and discharged themselves into the veins of the rocks.

Beside these streams knelt dwarfs, filling buckets with the flowing gold, silver, and copper, which other dwarfs carried away and stored in the King's treasure-chambers. But the greatest quantity flowed into the crevices of the mountain, from whence men dig it out with much toil.

Fried would have liked to fill his pockets with the precious metals, but did not dare ask the gnome-King's permission. They soon returned to the hall where the feast was prepared. On a long white marble table stood rows of golden dishes filled with various dainties, prepared from Fried's strawberries. In the background sat the musicians, bees and grasshoppers, that the dwarfs had caught in the forest. The dwarfs ate off little gold plates, and Fried ate with them. But the pieces were so tiny, they melted on his tongue before he could taste them.

After the feast came dancing. The gnome-men were old and shrivelled, with faces like roots of trees; all wore silver coats and red caps. The gnome-maidens were tall and stately, and wore on their heads wreaths of flowers that sparkled as though wet with dew. Fried danced with them, but because his clothes were so poor, his partner took a wreath of flowers from the wall and placed it on his head. Very pretty it looked on his bright, brown hair—but he could not see this, for the dwarfs have no looking-glasses. The bees buzzed and hummed like flutes and trombones, the grasshoppers chirped like fiddles.

The dancing ended, Fried approached the King, who was resting on his green throne, and said: "My Lord King, be so good as to pay for my berries, and have



"IT IS TIME I RETURNED TO MY MOTHER."

me guided out of the mountain, for it is time I returned to my mother."

The King nodded his carbuncle crown, and wrapping his golden mantle around him, departed to fetch the money. How Fried rejoiced at the thought of taking that money home! Being very tired, he mounted the throne, seated himself on the soft mushroom cushion from which the gnome-King had just risen, and, ere that monarch returned, Fried was sleeping sound as a dormouse.

Day was dawning in the forest when he awoke. His limbs were stiff, and his bare feet icy cold. He rubbed his eyes and stretched himself. He still sat beneath the tree from whence, on the previous evening, he had seen the light moving. "Where am I?" he muttered; then he remembered falling asleep on the gnome-King's mushroom cushion. He also remembered the money he had been promised, and felt in his pockets—they were empty. Yes, he remembered it all. This was the morning his mother should have gone to town, and he had neither berries nor money. Tears flowed from his eyes, and he reviled the dwarfs who had carried him sleeping from the mountain, and cheated him out of his money. Rising sorrowfully, he went to the mountain, but though he searched long and carefully, no opening could he find.

There was nothing for it but to return home, and this he did with a heavy heart. No one was stirring when he reached the village. Gently he knocked on the shutter of the room where his mother slept. "Wake up, mother," he cried. "It is I, your Fried."

Quickly the door of the little house opened.

"Thank Heaven you have returned," said his mother, embracing him. "But has nothing happened to you all night alone in the forest?"

"Nothing, mother," he replied; "I only had a foolish dream about the gnomes who dwell in the mountain."

And whilst his mother lit the stove, Fried related his dream. She shook her head on hearing it, for she believed her boy had really seen and heard these wonderful things.

Then Lorchen came in, and her mother told her to unfasten the shutters. The child obeyed, but on re-entering the room, she cried aloud, and placed her hands on her brother's head.

Something heavy and sparkling fell to the ground. They picked it up. It was the wreath of many-coloured flowers Fried's partner had given him at the dance. But the flowers were not like those that grow in the fields and meadows: they were cold, and sparkling, like those that adorned the walls of the mountain hall, and which the gnome-maidens wore in their hair.

It was now clear that Fried had really spent the night with the dwarfs. They all thought the flowers were only coloured glass; but as they sparkled so brilliantly, and filled the cottage with indescribable splendour, the mother determined to ask advice about them. She therefore broke a tiny branch from the wreath and took it to the town to a goldsmith, who told her, to her great astonishment, that the branch was composed of the most costly gems, rubies, diamonds, and sapphires. In exchange for it, he gave her a sack of gold so heavy she could scarcely carry it home.

Want was now at an end for ever, for the wreath was a hundred times more valuable than the tiny branch. Great excitement prevailed in the village when the widow's good fortune was made known, and all the villagers ran into the forest to search for the wonderful hole. But their searching was vain—none ever found the entrance to the mountain. From henceforth the widow and her children lived very happily; they remained pious and industrious in spite of their wealth, did good to the poor, and were contented to the end of their lives.

The Adventures of Said.

THE ADVENTURES OF SAID.

From the German of W. Hauff.

IN the time of Haroun Al-Raschid, ruler of Bagdad, there lived in Balsora a man Benezar by name. His means enabled him to live quietly and comfortably, without carrying on a business or trade; and when a son was born to him he made no change in his manner of living, "For," said he, "what will feed two will feed three." Said, for so they called the boy, soon made a name for himself among his playmates as a lusty fighter, and was surpassed by none in riding or swimming.

When he was eighteen, his father sent him on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and before he started gave him much good advice, and provided him with money for his journey. Lastly he said:

"There is something more I must tell you, my boy. I am not the man to believe that fairies and enchanters, whatever they may be, have any influence over the fate of mankind; that sort of nonsense is only good for whiling away the time; but your mother believed in them as firmly as in the Koran. She even told me, after making me swear never to reveal the secret except to her child, that she herself was under the protection of a fairy. I always laughed at her, but still I must confess that some very strange events happened at your birth. It rained and thundered all day, and the heavens were black with clouds.

"When they told me that I had a little son, I hastened to see and bless my first-born, but I found my wife's door shut, and all her attendants standing outside. I knocked, but with no result. While I was waiting there, the sky cleared just over Balsora, although the lightning still flashed and writhed round the blue expanse. As I was gazing in astonishment at this spectacle, your mother's door flew open and I went in alone. On entering the room, I perceived a delicious odour of roses, carnations. and hyacinths. Your mother Zemira showed me a tiny silver whistle, that was hanging round your neck by a gold chain as fine as silk. 'This is the fairy's gift to our boy,' she said. 'Well,' I laughed, 'I think she might have given him something better than that—a purse of gold, for instance, or a horse.'

"But Zemira begged me not to anger the good fairy, for fear she might turn her blessing to a curse; so, to please her, the matter was never mentioned again till she was dying. Then she gave me the whistle, telling me never to part with you till you were twenty, when the whistle was to be yours. But I see no objection to your going away now. You have common sense, and can defend yourself as well as any man of four-and-twenty. Go in peace, my son. Think ever of your father in good fortune or in ill, and may Heaven defend you from that last."

Said took an affectionate farewell of his father, and placing the chain round his neck, sprang lightly into his saddle, and went off to join the caravan for Mecca. At last they were all assembled, and Said rode gaily out of Balsora. Just at first the novelty of his position and surroundings occupied his thoughts, but as they drew near to the desert he began to consider his father's words. He drew out the whistle and put it to his lips, but wonder of wonders, no matter how hard he blew, not a sound came out! This was disappointing, and Said impatiently thrust the whistle back into his girdle; still the marvellous had a strange attraction for him, and he spent the whole day in building his airy castles.

Said was a fine-looking fellow, with a distinguished face, and a bearing which, young as he was, marked him out as one born to command. Every one was attracted to him, and especially was this the case with an elderly man, who rode near him. They entered into conversation, and it was not long before the mysterious power of fairies was mentioned.

"Do you believe in fairies?" asked Said, at last.

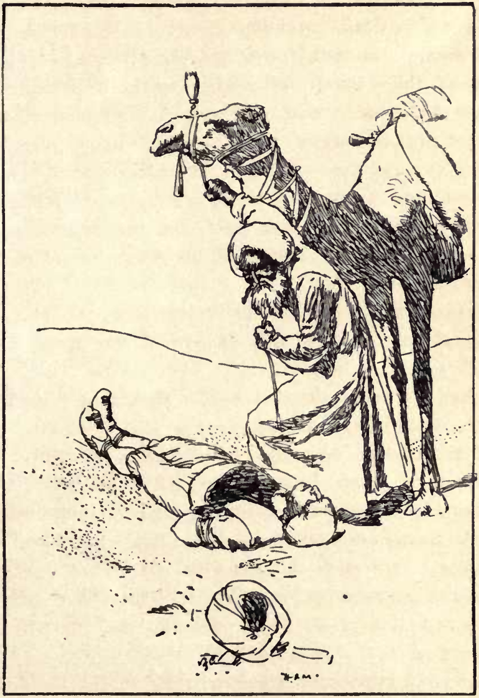
"Well," replied the other, stroking his beard thoughtfully, "I should not like to say that there are no such beings, although I have never seen one." And then he began to relate such wonderful stories, that Said felt that his mother's words must have been true, and when he went to sleep was transported to a veritable fairyland.

The next day the travellers were dismayed to see a band of robbers swooping down on them. All was confusion in an instant, and they had scarcely had time to place the women and children in the centre, when the Arabs were upon them. Bravely as the men acquitted themselves, all was in vain, for the robbers were more than four hundred strong. At this dreadful moment Said bethought him of his whistle; but, alas! it remained dumb as before, and poor Said, dropping it hastily, fired on a man, who seemed from his dress to be of some importance.

"What have you done?" cried the old man, who was fighting at his side. There is no hope for us now."

"And so, indeed, it seemed—for the robbers, maddened by the death of the man, pressed so closely on the youth that they broke down even his sturdy resistance. The others were soon overcome or slain, and Said found himself on horseback, bound and guarded by armed men. These treated him with roughness, and the only drop of comfort in his cup was that his old friend was riding near. You may be sure his thoughts were not very pleasant—slavery or death was all he had to look forward to.

After riding for some time, they saw in the far distance trees and tents, and in a short time they were met by bands of women and children, who had no sooner heard the news than they began to throw sticks and clods of earth at Said, shrieking, "That is the man who killed the great Almansor, bravest of men; he must die, and we will throw his body to the jackals."



"AFTER SEVERAL HOURS HE AWOKE" (*p.* 225).

They became so threatening that the bandits interfered and, bearing off their prisoner, led him bound into one of the tents. Here was seated an old man, evidently the leader of the band. His head was bent.

"The weeping of the women has told me all—Almansor is dead," said he.

"Almansor is dead," answered the robbers, "O Mighty One of the Desert, but here is his murderer. Only speak the word. Shall his doom be to be shot, or to be hanged from the nearest tree?"

But the aged Selim questioned Said, and found that his son had been slain in fair fight. "He has done, then, no more than we ourselves should have done. Loose his bonds. The innocent shall not die," cried Selim, in his sternest tones, seeing his men's reluctance and discontent. As for Said, the very fulness of his heart closed his lips, and he could not find words in which to thank his deliverer. From this time he lived in Selim's tent, almost taking the place of that son whose death he had caused.

But sedition was rife among the robbers. Their beloved Prince had been murdered, and his murderer was shielded by the father! Many were the execrations hurled at Said, as he walked in the camp; indeed, several attempts were made on his life. At length Selim perceived that soon even his influence would not be sufficient to guard the young man, and so he sent him away with an escort, saying that his ransom had been paid. But before they started he bound the robbers by a dreadful oath that they would not kill Said.

It was indeed a terrible ride! Said saw that his guides were performing their task with great reluctance, and soon they began to whisper together. He nerved himself to listen, and what he heard did not tend to reassure him.

"This is the very spot," said one. "I shall never forget it."

"And to think that his murderer still lives!"

"Ah! if his father had not made us take that oath!"

"Stay," cried the most forbidding-looking of all, "we have not sworn to bring this fellow to the end of his journey. We will leave him his life, but the scorching sun and the sharp teeth of the jackal shall perform our vengeance. Let us bind him and leave him here."

Said, hearing this brutal suggestion, made a despeate effort for his life. Spurring his horse, he rode off at full speed; but the bandits soon recovered from their amazement, and, giving chase, had him at their mercy. Tears, prayers, even bribes were of no avail, and the wretched Said was left to face death in its most painful form. Higher and higher mounted the sun, and Said tried to roll over to obtain some small relief. In doing this the whistle attracted his notice, and he contrived to get it between his lips; but for the third time it refused its office, and Said, overcome by the heat and the horror of his situation, fainted. After several hours he awoke to see, not the dreaded beast of prey but a human being.

This was a little man with small eyes and a long beard, who informed Said, when the latter had somewhat recovered, that he was Kalum Bek, a merchant, and that he was on a business expedition when he found him lying half dead in the sand. Said thanked the little man, and gratefully accepted a seat on his camel. As they were journeying the merchant related many stories in praise of the justice and acuteness of the Father of the Faithful.

"My cousin Messour," he said, "is his Lord Chamberlain, and he has often told me how the Caliph is wont to sally forth at night, attended by himself alone, to see how his people are cared for. And so, when we go about the streets at night, we have to be polite to every idiot we meet, for it is as likely to be the Caliph as some dog of an Arab from the desert.

Hearing such accounts as these, Said thought himself a lucky fellow to have the chance of seeing Bagdad and the renowned Al-Raschid. When they arrived in the city, Kalum invited Said to accompany him home. The next day the youth had just dressed himself in his most magnificent clothes, thinking of the sensation he would cause, when the merchant entered, and, looking at him scornfully, said: "That is all very fine, my young sir, but it seems to me you are a great dreamer. Have you the money to keep up that style?"

"It is true, sir," said Said, blushing, "that I have no money; but perhaps you will be kind enough to lend me sufficient to travel home with, for my father is sure to repay you."

"Your father, boy," laughed the merchant. "I really think the sun must have affected your brain. You don't suppose, do you, that I believe the fable you made up for my benefit? I know all the rich men in Balsora, but no Benezar. Besides, do you think the disappearance of a whole caravan would pass unnoticed? And then, you bare-faced liar, that story about Selim! Why, that, man is noted for his cruelty; and do you mean to tell me that he allowed the murderer of his son to go free—and that, too, without ransom? Oh, you shameless liar!"

"Indeed, I have spoken the truth," cried Said. "I have no proof of my words, and can only swear to you that I have spoken no falsehood. If you will not help me then I must appeal to the Caliph."

"Really!" scoffed the little man; "you will beg, then, from no less exalted a person than our gracious ruler! Just consider that the Caliph can only be approached through my cousin Messour, and that with a word I could—— But I pity your youth. You are not too old yet for reformation. You shall serve in my shop for a year, and then, if you wish to leave me, I will pay you your wages, and let you go whither you will. I give you till mid-day to think over it. If you refuse, I will seize your clothes and possessions to pay myself for your passage, and throw you on the streets."

Said was indeed in difficulties; bad luck seemed to press upon him at every turn. There was no escaping from the room, for the windows were barred and the door locked. After cudgelling his brains for some time, he saw that he must submit to the indignity imposed upon him by the villainous little man, and so the next day he followed him to the shop in the bazaar. His duty was to stand (his gallant attire a thing of the past) in the doorway, a veil or a shawl in either hand, and cry his wares to the passers-by.

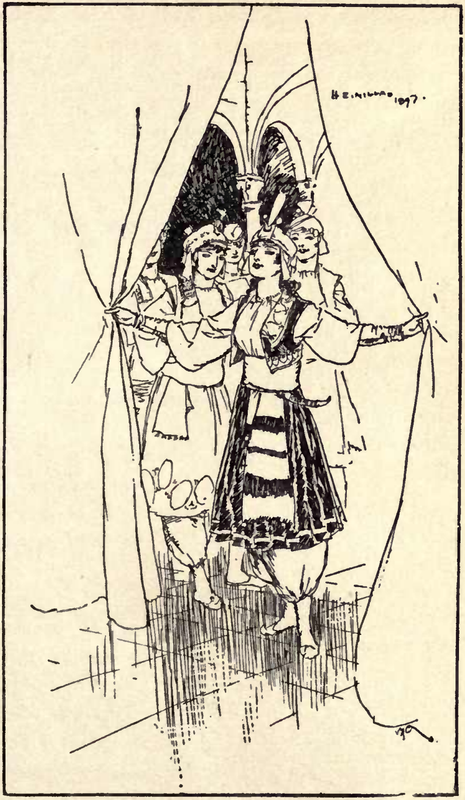
Said soon saw why Kalum had been so anxious to retain him as a servant. No one wished to do business with the hateful old man, but when the salesman was a handsome youth it was a different matter altogether. One especially busy day all the porters were employed, when an elderly lady entered and made some purchases. After she had bought all she wanted she demanded some one to carry her parcels home for her. In vain did the merchant promise to send them in half an hour—she would have them then or never; and her eye falling on Said, she wanted to know why he should not accompany her. After much remonstrance Kalum had to give in, and Said found himself following in the wake of the lady, who stopped at last before a magnificent house. She knocked and they were admitted, and after mounting a wide marble staircase, Said found himself in a lofty hall, far grander than he had ever seen before. Here he was relieved of his burden, and was just going out at the door, when—

"Said," cried a sweet voice behind him. He turned round quickly, and saw to his amazement a daintily beautiful lady surrounded by attendants, instead of the old lady he had followed.

"Said, my dear boy," she said, "it is a great misfortune that you left Balsora before you were twenty; but here in Bagdad there is some chance for you. Have you still your little whistle?"

"Indeed I have," he cried gladly; "perhaps you are the kindly fairy who befriended my mother?"

"Yes, and as long as you are good I will help you. But, alas! I cannot even deliver you from that wretch,


H. E. MILLAR 1917.

"A DAINTILY BEAUTIFUL LADY" (*p.* 228).

Kalum Bek, for he is protected by your most powerful enemy."

"But can we do nothing? Can I not go to the Caliph? He is a just man and will help me."

"Haroun is indeed just, but he is greatly influenced by Messour, who, a model of uprightness himself, has been already primed by Kalum with his version of your story. But there are other ways of getting at the Caliph, and it is written in the stars that you will obtain his favour."

"I am to be pitied if I have to stay much longer with that rascal of a shopkeeper. But there is one favour I beg of you, most gracious of fairies. Jousts are held every week, but only for the freeborn. Couldn't you manage to give me equipments, and make my face so that no one would know me?"

"That is a wish worthy of a brave man, and I will grant it. Come here each week, and you will find everything you want. And now, farewell. Be cautious and virtuous. In six months your whistle will sound, and Zulima will answer its appeal."

Said took leave of his protectress, and, taking note of the position of the house, made his way back to the shop. He arrived there in the very nick of time, for Kalum was surrounded by a crowd of jeering neighbours, and was literally dancing with rage. This was what had happened. Two men had asked the merchant if he could direct them to the shop of the handsome salesman.

"Well! well!" said the old man, smiling, "Heaven has guided you to the right place this time. What do you want, a shawl or a veil?"

This to the men seemed nothing short of insolence, and they fell upon him tooth and nail, the neighbours refusing to help the old skinflint. But Said, seeing his master in such distress, strode to the rescue, and one of the assailants soon found himself on the ground. Under the influence of his flashing eyes the crowd soon melted away, for violence on the wrong side was not to their taste.

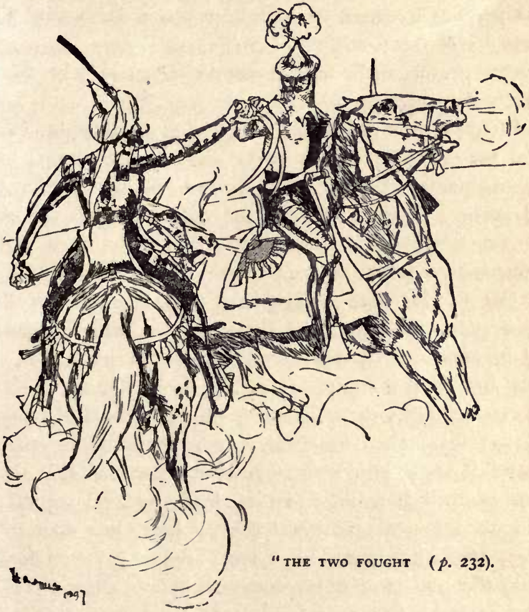
"Oh, you prince of shopmen, that is what I call interfering to some purpose! Didn't he lie on the ground as if he had never used his legs? I should have lost my beard for ever if you had not come up. How shall I reward you?"

Said had only acted upon the impulse of the moment; indeed, he now felt rather sorry that he had deprived the scoundrel of a well-deserved thrashing. He seized the opportunity, however, and asked for an evening a week in which to take a walk. This was granted him, and the next Wednesday he set out for the fairy's house. Here he found everything as Zulima had promised. First the servants gave him a wash, which changed him from a stripling to a black-bearded man, whose face was bronzed by exposure to the sun. Then he was led into a second room, where he saw a dress that would not have been put to shame by the State robes of the Caliph. He hastily donned this, and, magnificently equipped, descended the stairs. As he reached the door, a servant handed him a silk handkerchief with which to wipe his face when he wished to rid himself of his disguise. In the court were standing three horses; two were ridden by squires, but the most magnificent was for his own use. When Said arrived on the plain set apart for the jousts, all eyes turned on him, and curiosity was rife as to who the unknown knight could be; that he was distinguished and of high family none doubted.

When Said entered the lists he gave his name as Almansor of Cairo, and said that he had come to Bagdad because of the fame of the youths of that city. The sides were chosen, and the opposing parties charged. Said's horse was as swift as an eagle, and his prowess with the sword was so great that even the bravest shunned meeting him, and the Caliph's brother, who had been on his side, challenged him to single combat. The two fought, but were so equal that the contest had to be postponed till the next meeting. On the following day all Bagdad was ringing with the praises of the gallant young knight; and little did the people guess that he was then serving in a shop in the bazaar.

At the next tournament Said carried all before him, and received from the Caliph a golden medallion hanging from a gold chain. This aroused the envy of the other youths. Was a stranger to come to Bagdad and rob them of their honour? Said noticed the signs of discontent, and observed that all viewed him askance, except the brother and son of the Caliph. By a strange chance the one most bitter against him was the man he had knocked down before Kalum Bek's shop. Led by this man, the others made a sudden attack on Said, who must have fallen if the Royal combatants had not rushed to his aid.

For more than four months he continued to fight in the lists, but one night as he was going home he noticed four men who were walking slowly before him. To his astonishment, he found they were speaking in the dialect used by Selim's band. He suspected that they were after no good, and so he crept nearer to hear what they were saying.



"THE TWO FOUGHT (*p.* 232).

"He will be in the street to the right of the bazaar to-night, attended by the Grand Vizier," said one.

"That is good," answered the other; "there is no fear of the Grand Vizier, but I am not so sure of the Caliph—there might be some of his guard near."

"No, there won't," broke in a third; "he is always alone at night."

"I think it would be best to throw a lasso over his head," said the first.

"Very well, an hour after midnight"; and with these words they separated.

"Well, I have discovered a pretty plot," thought Said, and his first idea was to go at once to the Caliph; but he remembered how Kalum had maligned him to Messour, and stopped. No, the only way was for him to defend the Caliph in person. Accordingly, when night came on, he betook himself to the appointed street, and waited to see what was going to happen. Soon the men came and concealed themselves in different parts of the street. All was quiet for half an hour, and at the end of that time one of the robbers gave a sign, for the Caliph was in sight. With one accord the band rushed upon him, but Said rose from his hiding-place, and laid about him with such hearty goodwill that they were soon glad to take to their heels with all speed.

"My rescue," said the Caliph, "is no less wonderful than the attack made upon me. How did you know who I was? How did you get to know of the plot?"

Said then told how he had followed the men, and, hearing their plans, determined to frustrate their villainous intention.

"Receive my thanks," said the Caliph, "and accept this ring. Present it to-morrow at the palace, and we will see what can be done for you."

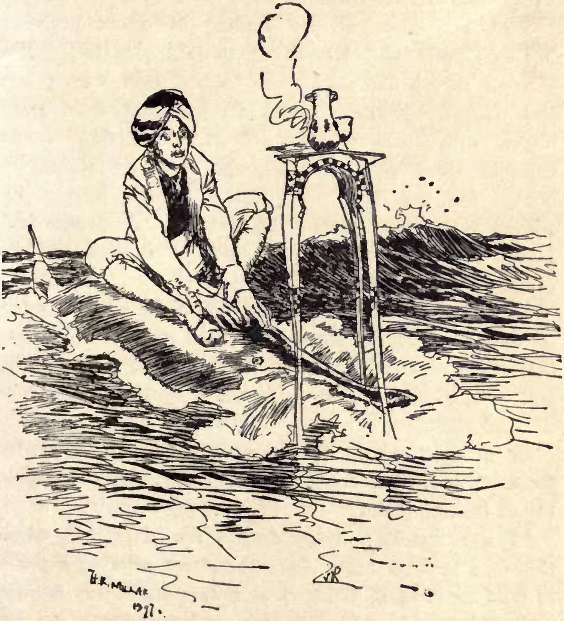
The Vizier, too, gave him a ring, together with a heavy purse.

Mad with joy, Said hurried home, but here Kalum was awaiting him, anxious lest he should have lost his handsome servant. The little man raved at Said, but the latter had seen that his purse was full of money, and told him flatly that he would stay there no longer. He strode out at the door, leaving Kalum staring after him in open-mouthed astonishment. The next morning the merchant set the police on his track, and they brought him word that his quondam servant, dressed in a most magnificent fashion, was just setting out with a caravan.

"He has stolen money from me, the thief!" Kalum shrieked, and ordered the constable to arrest Said. As Kalum was known to be related to Messour, his commands were promptly attended to, and poor Said found himself condemned, unheard, as having stolen the purse from his master. He was sentenced to life-long banishment on a desert island, and all his protestations of innocence were of no avail. The poor fellow was in despair, and even the stony-hearted merchant put in a plea for him. He was thrown into a filthy dungeon, together with nineteen others. He comforted himself with the thought that his life would be more endurable on board ship, but here he was mistaken. The atmosphere was foul, and the men fought like wild beasts for the best places. Food and water were handed out to them once a day, and at the same time the men who had died were hauled out.

A fortnight was passed in this misery, but one day they felt the ship was tossing more than usual, and their discomfort was increased. At last the survivors burst the hatches open, but to their despair they saw that the ship had been deserted by all the crew. The storm raged even more wildly, the ship rocked and settled deeper into the water. At last it went to pieces, and Said managed to cling to the mast. After he had floated for about half an hour, he suddenly remembered his whistle. It still hung round his neck, and holding on well with one hand to the mast, he put it to his mouth, and this time it did not fail him. At the sound of the clear, sweet note, the storm ceased as if by magic, and the sea became like glass, and, what was more wonderful still, the mast by which Said was supported was changed into a huge dolphin, to his no small terror. But he soon found there was no need for him to be afraid, for the fish bore him as swiftly as an arrow through the water.

After some time Said, remembering tales of enchanters, drew out his whistle, and blowing a shrill blast, wished for a meal. At once a table rose from the depths of the sea, and Said enjoyed the much-needed refreshment. The sun was just sinking, when he saw a large town in the distance which reminded him of Bagdad. The thought of Bagdad was not so very pleasant, but still he trusted that the fairy, who had guarded him so far, would not let him fall into the hands of Kalum Bek. As he drew nearer he noticed a large house on the bank of the river, the roof of which was crowded with men, who were all gazing in astonishment at himself. No sooner had Said set foot on the land, than the fish vanished, and at the same time the servants appeared to lead him before their master. On the roof were standing three men, who questioned him in a friendly way. Said at once began to relate his story, from the time when he left Balsora, and his listeners declared that they believed him; still, they asked if he could produce the golden chain and the rings of which he had spoken.


H.R. MILLAR '97.

"A TABLE ROSE FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA" (*p.* 236).

"Here they are," said Said. "I determined not to part with them while I had life to defend them."

"By the beard of the Prophet, this is my ring, Grand Vizier—our deliverer stands before us!"

Said was overcome by finding in whose presence he was, and flung himself at the Caliph's feet. But Haroun raised him, and overwhelmed him with praise and thanks. Nothing would do but that Said must return with them to the palace, where they would conceive some plan to bring the merchant Kalum to book. On the next day Kalum himself begged for admittance to the presence of Haroun. A dispute had arisen between himself and a man of Balsora, and he asked for judgment.

"I will hear him," said the Caliph. "Said," turning to the youth as the servant left the room, "this is no other than your father. Do you hide behind that curtain, and you, Grand Vizier, fetch the magistrate who condemned Said."

In a short time Kalum entered, accompanied by Benezar, and, after the Caliph had mounted his throne, began his complaint.

"I was standing at my door a few days ago, when this man Benezar came down the street, offering a purse of gold for news of Said. I at once claimed the money, and told him how his son, for so I found him to be, had suffered the penalty for stealing a purse from me. Then the madman demanded his money back, and wanted to make me responsible for his rascal of a son."

"Bring the magistrate who condemned the youth," commanded Haroun. He was produced as if by magic. After much questioning, the justice confessed that no witness had been brought forward except the purse.

"Why," shouted the Grand Vizier, "that is my purse, you scoundrel; and I gave it to the gallant youth who saved me."

"Then," thundered the Caliph, "you swore falsely, Kalum Bek. What was done to Said?"

"I sent him to a desert island," stammered the magistrate.

"Oh, Said, my son, my son!" wept the unhappy father.

"Stand forth, Said," said the Caliph.

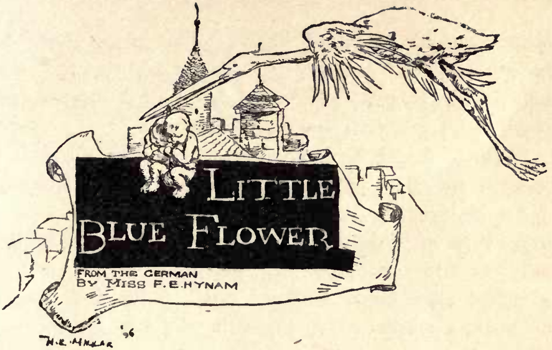
Confronted by this apparition, Kalum and the justice flung themselves on their knees, crying, "Mercy!" mercy!"

"Did you have mercy on the misfortunes of this unhappy boy? You, my best of judges, shall retire to a desert island, so that you may have an opportunity of studying justice. But, Kalum Bek, what am I to say to you? You shall pay Said for all the time he has served you, and," as Kalum was beginning to congratulate himself on coming so well out of the business, "for the perjury you shall receive a hundred strokes on the soles of your feet. Take the men away and carry out their sentence."

The wretched beings were led away, and the Caliph took Said and his father into another apartment. Here their conversation was interrupted by the yells of Kalum, who was undergoing punishment in the court outside.

The Caliph invited Benezar to bring his goods and settle in Bagdad. He gladly consented, and Said spent his life in the palace built for him by the grateful Caliph—indeed, the proverb ran in Bagdad, "May I be as good and fortunate as Said, the son of Benezar."

Little Blue Flower.



LITTLE BLUE FLOWER

FROM THE GERMAN
BY MISS F. E. HYNAM

A STORK swept high over the Bohemian forest. It was a most important duty that had brought him from his own marshes into this mountainous region, where far and wide no croak of frog could be heard. In his beak he carried two little children, a boy and a girl, both intended for the knight who dwelt in the gloomy fortress below. Smaller and smaller grew the circles made by the stork in his flight. Lower and lower he sank towards the earth, until at length he rested on the highest chimney of the castle.

But before letting the children slip down the narrow black hole he paused and looked carefully around. While in the air, this old castle, with its round turrets glittering in the rising sun, had appeared to him a most stately edifice. But now, when quite close, the stork discovered many things that did not please him. The walls were sadly out of repair, there were holes in the roof, whilst the courtyard was overgrown with weeds.

I do not like this," said the stork, looking thoughtfully down his long, red beak. "This place seems to have a very bad landlord. A knight who cannot keep his castle in proper repair certainly does not deserve two children. I will take one away with me.

"Which should he have now, the boy or the girl?" thought the stork. He looked once more thoughtfully down his long beak, and on the two children smiling happily in their dreams. "I think I will give him the boy," he said at length. "He will push his way in this wretched place better than the girl." With these words he made a movement to throw the little boy down the chimney.

This, however, was not so easy as the stork had thought. In their sleep the little ones had embraced each other, and would not let go. "I have never had two such obstinate little creatures in my beak before," exclaimed the stork angrily. Then he began to shake them, at first gently, then harder, and at last so roughly that the children half awoke from their dreams, and looked at each other with blinking eyes. After this the boy would not let go his companion, and no wonder, for the little girl had shown him a pair of blue eyes of such wondrous beauty, that there were not many like them in the world. But the stork, now thoroughly angry, gave the poor little fellow a kick that sent him head first down the castle chimney.

"Now, what shall I do with the other little thing?" said the stork thoughtfully, scratching the back of his ear. "Ah! I have it," he cried—the little girl had kept on blinking her eyes, and the stork had also seen their beautiful blue—"I have it!" he repeated. "Such eyes can only belong to Norway."

High overhead soared the stork. Powerfully his wings clove the air as he sailed away towards the north.

In the midst of the blue Baltic Sea a little wooded island lay sparkling like a green jewel. Here dwelt Bjorn, a grim old sea-king of Norwegian blood. Every year he and his men ploughed the sea with their swift ships, and very rich was the spoil he brought home to his strong castle that stood in the centre of the island, defended by wall and moat.

To this castle the stork bore the little maiden on his strong wings.

Bjorn and his men were sitting in the spacious hall, quaffing from golden cups the sweet wine they had brought back in their ships from the sunny land of Greece. Very wild was their joy when the little maiden came down the chimney, and throughout the whole night their boisterous songs could be heard far across the wide sea.

And the little, sparkling waves sang in reply a rushing murmuring song, to celebrate the arrival of the young child. "To our sea-king a little daughter has been born," they sang. "A beauteous little maiden, with eyes blue as the sea, locks fair as the sea foam, and lips rosy as the morning red when it gilds the crests of the waves." Even the stupid fishes rejoiced, but as they could not, sing they leapt into the air, high up out of the waves, and their scales glittered in the moonlight like gold and silver.

Many days and many nights Bjorn and his crew drank of the pearly wine. Then he could rest at home no longer, so ordered his ships and sailed away, leaving the child, to whom he had given the name of Swanhild, in charge of a faithful nurse.

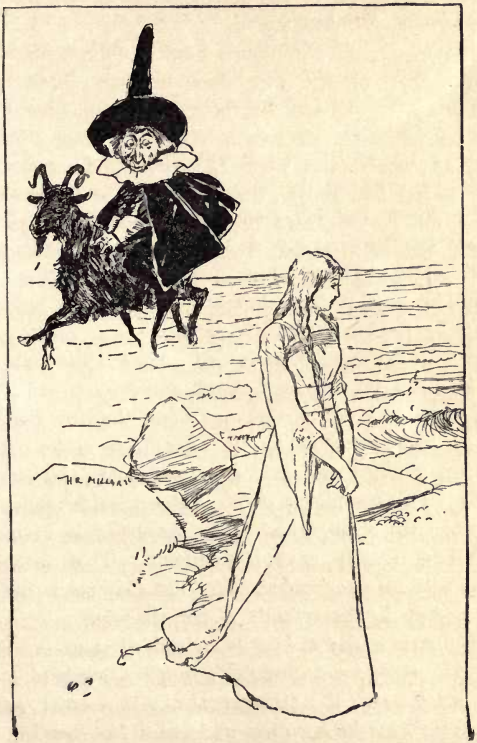
On this voyage Bjorn encountered more storms and enemies than he had ever done before. Often, whilst on the tossing billows, he thought with longing of the little one at home. Yet many long years passed ere he could at length return home laden with rich spoil.

As he set foot on the little island he was greeted by a beautiful maiden, with deep blue eyes, rosy lips, and the fair hair of Norway. Full of joy, Bjorn clasped his lovely child to his heart. Then he sat with his men in the castle hall, feasting and quaffing the costly Grecian wine.

Swanhild had never before seen such noisy feasts. Often, on moonlight nights, she would leave the castle and wander alone on the sea-shore.

But one evening, as she thus wandered, clad in her white garments, and with her fair head bent towards the waves, she was seen by a wicked magician, who had flown thither through the air on a black goat. He came from the cliffs of Norway, where he had been sent to seize the soul of a poor Laplander who had stolen his neighbour's reindeer, and he was now travelling to Blocksberg to take this soul to his master, a powerful evil spirit.

When the magician saw Swanhild he was much delighted. He had never before beheld any one so lovely. But alas! while he was lost in contemplation of her beauty the soul of the little Laplander escaped, and flew away. He let it go. Seeking a secluded spot, he at once summoned a number of crabs and water-beetles, which he placed in three shining mussel-shells. One touch of his staff changed these shells filled with crabs



"WHEN THE MAGICIAN SAW SWANHILD HE WAS MUCH DELIGHTED" (*p.* 246).

and water-beetles into magnificent vessels full of well-armed men. His black goat became a skald, and played the harp. Then transforming himself into a handsome young Viking, he ordered the sails to be hoisted, and rounding a wooded promontory, sailed into the bay where Bjorn's vessel lay.

Loudly the sentries on Bjorn's ship blew their horns. Louder yet rang out the answering blast from the castle. Wildly Bjorn and his men broke through the forest. Furious was their war-cry, shrilly clanged their weapons.

The strange Viking stepped forward boldly, and extending his hand to Bjorn in token of friendship, besought hospitality for himself and his men.

Bjorn let himself be persuaded. He led the strangers into his splendid halls, and drank and feasted with them many days and many nights. Then the strange hero ordered rich presents to be brought from his ships: garments studded with gold, gold ornaments, and shining swords. This completely deceived Bjorn and his followers, and when the stranger asked for Swanhild in marriage, the Viking readily gave his consent. That Swanhild turned pale no one heeded. Nor did they heed that she wept nightly in the solitude of her chamber.

The marriage day at length arrived. But when everything was ready, and Swanhild, in glittering array, was being led towards the stranger, she, with a quick movement, turned her back on him and fled to her chamber.

Loudly raged the father, his eyes glowing with fury. But wilder still rolled the eyes of the stranger. He broke into a laugh, and cried, with mocking voice, "You shall all pay for this."

One look from those fierce eyes, and his men became a crowd of crabs and water-beetles. The skald threw away his harp, and stood there a black goat with fiery eyes. The stranger shook off his armour, and was a horrible old man.

Bjorn grew pale with terror, his followers began to tremble and shake. Another look from the magician: they all shrank together, and a crawling mass of frogs covered the floor. Bjorn was the largest of them all. Then opening door and gate, the magician drove them out into the marshy moat. Here they dived.

The magician then locked the door and threw the key into the moat. At her chamber windows Swanhild sat weeping. He looked up at her furiously, but she was so good and pure, his glance had no power over her. He shook his fist threateningly.

"Now sit there all alone," he cried, "since you will not marry me. You cannot escape, and no one can deliver you, for my goat keeps guard."

He flew away whistling. The black goat walked round and round the moat, his eyes gleaming like living coals. The frogs croaked in the evening light, and above, in her chamber, Swanhild wept solitary and forsaken.

In the meantime, the boy left by the stork at the gloomy castle in the Bohemian forest had become a valiant knight, who knew well how to use his sword. Yet so strange a knight as he had never before sat in Walnut-tree Castle. This was the name of his ancestral home.

Since his father's death Wulf had lived quite alone in the ruined castle, for none of the servants would stay after the old knight died. But this did not trouble

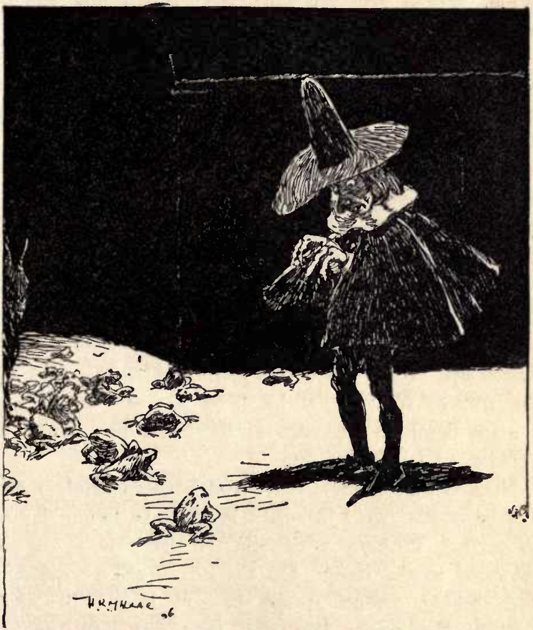
Wulf. He did not care to hunt the wild boar through the thicket, or kill the frightened stag. His chief pleasure was to stretch himself on the thick, soft moss, and gaze through the green branches of the forest trees at the blue heavens that smiled here and there in little flocks through the thick foliage. He also loved to seek for forest flowers—the blue were his favourites. Whence this preference he knew not, but he dreamt he had once looked into Swanhild's blue eyes. Or, when tired of these things, he would stand at one of the castle windows, gazing thoughtfully out into the blue distance. "Far away yonder," so ran his thoughts at these times, "where the blue heaven bends down to touch the earth, should I not find happiness there? Were it not better to journey abroad in search of happiness than to remain alone in this solitary castle, through whose walls the wind whistles, whilst owls and bats are now the only occupants of its once stately halls?"

But though longing to go out into the world, Wulf remained in the ruined castle, in obedience to an old command of one of his ancestors.

In the middle of the castle court there grew in the cleft of a rock a gigantic walnut tree. From it the the castle had received its name. The nut from which this tree had sprung had been planted in olden times by one of Wulf's ancestors, who at the same time had carved these words on the rock:—

Where flourishes this tree, there shall my house remain.
While it stands, forsake it not to search abroad for fame;
But should the ancient glory from these halls e'er disappear,
Life from this tree shall make it shine once more quite bright and clear.

Their splendour had long since disappeared, and how the tree could restore it Wulf could not imagine; still, he remained obedient to the command.



"A CRAWLING MASS OF FROGS COVERED THE FLOOR" (*p.* 249).

One evening a mighty storm arose. Black clouds obscured the sky. The lightning flashed; the thunder rolled. The storm raged through the forest. The mouldering stones of the old castle slipped from their places, and the wind whistled through the gaps, and raged through the old rooms and passages. Then a flash of lightning! a clap of thunder! The castle was in ruins! Wulf escaped into the open air; before him lay the walnut tree, shivered by the lightning.

He immediately saddled his horse. What need to remain here longer? Hastily snatching a few ripe nuts that lay among the shattered branches, he concealed them in his doublet as a remembrance, and then rode away through the gloomy forest.

Far and wide, Wulf wandered over the green earth beneath the blue heavens, encountering many enemies. But in spite of all he kept courageously on his way.

One day his path led through a thick forest of beech trees. He looked around thoughtfully as his horse scattered the fallen leaves at every step. Suddenly he looked up. What was it that shimmered so blue through the trees? Wulf urged his horse forward, but beneath a giant beech at the edge of the forest he halted; the endless sea lay before him.

Here is blue heaven above and beneath, surely I shall find happiness here?" thought Wulf, as he swung himself to earth. Without a thought he left his horse, and hastened to the shore. On the soft waves a small bark was rocking. Wulf sprang in and loosed the chain. Lightly the waves bore the boat out into the blue distance.

For a long time Wulf lay contentedly in the bottom of the boat. He felt as though he were a little child folded into his mother's arms, safe from all want and danger. And he thought the waves wished to tell him something, but he could not understand their language. Yet he saw that they bore his bark ever more swiftly forward, and he rejoiced at the increasing speed.

There was a grating sound under the keel: Wulf had reached land at last. Before him lay a wooded island. Above the tops of the trees rose the turrets of a stately castle. He hastened forward and arrived at the castle moat. An unearthly stillness reigned over all around. Nothing moved save a swarm of frogs. These swam round and round in the moat, or sat on the leaves of the water-lilies, and croaked in what seemed to Wulf most sorrowful tones. But the largest amongst them behaved in a most extraordinary manner. He was for ever trying to climb up the castle wall, but if after much trouble he managed to get up a little way, he always fell back again. Then he would seat himself on a water-lily, look upwards, and wipe his eyes as though he were weeping.

Wulf also looked up.

"Happiness at last!" he exclaimed. "The blue eyes!' But he got no further. A violent push from an angry goat sent him flying into the middle of the moat.

Wulf felt himself sinking fast. His feet got entangled among the twisted roots of the water-lilies. With great difficulty he managed to keep his head above the water.

"And here I must die," said he in anguish.

Then from out his doublet sounded soft little voices:—

"The blessing of Urahn to you is near.
Do not despair, for help is present here."

And behold! all around him now began a wonderful rustling and moving. He groped about with his hands, and felt that tender little roots had forced their way through his doublet and were taking root in the slime. And all around him he saw little green walnut-tree leaves rising out of the water. Twigs followed the leaves, and these again became branches. Wulf felt he was being forced upwards; soon he was safely out of the water. Looking up, he saw Swanhild's blue eyes. He stretched out his arms towards her and she smiled.

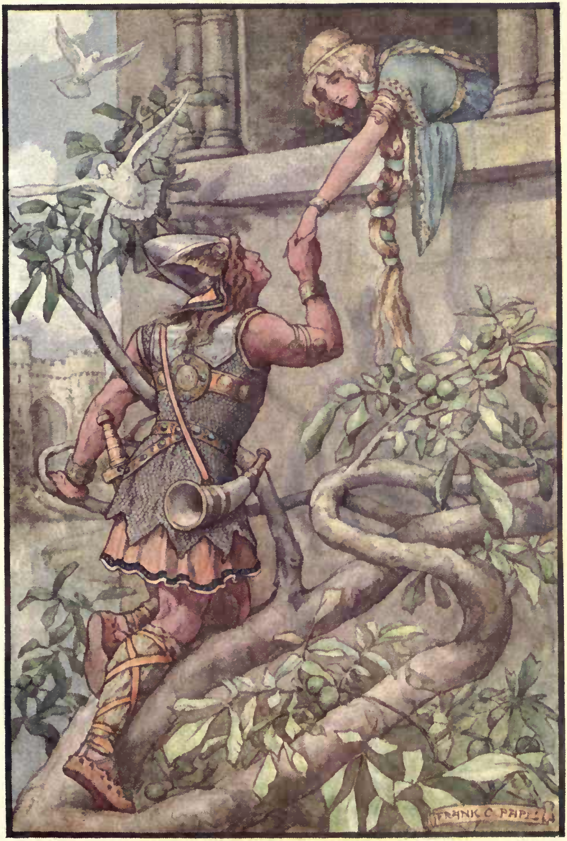
Higher and higher Wulf was borne. Five strong walnut trees grew beneath him, and bore him up on their branches. Now he could reach up and touch Swanhild's hands. Now he sat by her at the window, and gazed into her blue eyes.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Swanhild," she replied.

"It is a very beautiful name," said Wulf. "But for my sake you must now be called Little Blue Flower. When I was quite a child I saw your eyes in my dreams. They appeared to me like little blue flowers, and every day I searched for these flowers in the forest, but they were never sufficiently beautiful. Now you shall be my Little Blue Flower." And then he gave her a kiss.

But now a fresh movement began in the moat below. The stout frog was able to scramble up the crooked, rough stems of the walnut tree, better than up the smooth castle wall. Boldly he climbed, and the whole army of frogs followed him. At length he reached the top. Swanhild gently laid her hand on his head, and instead of the frog old Bjorn sat on one of the branches of the walnut tree, and embraced and kissed both his daughter and Wulf. Then the other frogs came, and Swanhild


FRANK C. PAPÉ

" Now he could reach up and touch Swanhild's hands."

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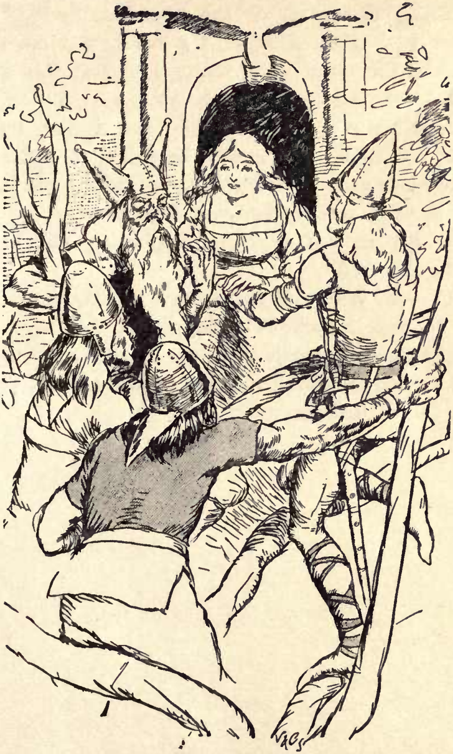


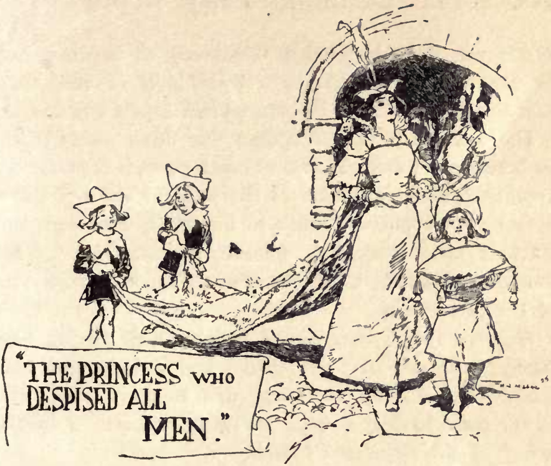
"SOON ALL BJORN'S FOLLOWERS WERE SITTING ON THE BRANCHES" (*p.* 256).

laid her hand on them all. Soon all Bjorn's followers were sitting in crowds on the branches, dangling their legs for joy. Full of anger, the black goat ran round and round the castle moat, rolling his great fiery eyes.

Just as the last frog was changed, a mighty rushing noise was heard. The magician flew raging through the air. With his magic staff he struck the poor goat a fierce blow, and then rode back on him to Blocksberg. Here it went very badly with him, because he came without the soul of the little Laplander, and he was severely punished.

Bjorn, with Wulf and all his men, joyfully entered the castle through Swanhild's window. A few days later Swanhild's marriage with Wulf was celebrated with great splendour, and they lived together in peace and happiness to the end of their days.

"The Princess Who Despised all Men."



"THE PRINCESS WHO DESPISED ALL MEN."

By Charles Smith Cheltnam.

THERE was once a King and Queen who, having everything a King and Queen could reasonably desire, might have been as happy as the day was long—if they had only taken the right means for making the best of their good fortune.

The King was a pattern of amiability, and, as to wisdom, could have held his own in comparison with any crowned potentate on earth; but of the Queen not half as much could be said in praise. As a girl, her beauty had been renowned, and had brought to her Princes by the score as wooers; but to their suits she had, as the phrase is, turned a deaf ear, regarding men as creatures made wholly of ill qualities, and marriage with them a debasement of herself in every sense; and it was not until her father threatened to imprison her for the rest of her life in a town built of steel and adamant, that she could be induced to accept a husband.

The amiability of her spouse was often sorely tried by her constant disparagement of men; but, being founded upon exceptional goodness of character, he did not allow it to be overcome, and schooled himself to bear with her fantastic ideas, rewarding himself for his leniency by sometimes laughing in his sleeve at the more preposterous of her pretensions.

A great many years passed without their having any family until, one day, the Queen had a baby girl, and consoled herself by reflecting that that, at least, was better than having a boy, "to grow up into a horrid man," as she expressed herself.

It happened that, at the moment of the little Princess's birth, the fairy Gaieia was passing the palace, and, as she had no particularly pressing business on hand, slipped in, and, after congratulating the Queen on the beauty of her offspring, constituted herself the infant's godmother—as was the fairy custom at that period—at the same time laughingly predicting that she would prove to be "the joy of her parents."

It hardly needs to be recorded that, with her very peculiar views as to what a woman's conduct in life ought to be, the Queen did not permit her daughter to receive instruction of any kind from anybody but herself; the King, consequently, rarely saw his child, and knew nothing of the character which had been made for her by her mother, rather than allowed to come to her and develop itself in the natural order of things.

In this way the Princess Disdainana—so her mother had insisted on naming her—was brought up until she had reached her seventeenth year. If the youthful beauty of her mother had been renowned, that of the Princess was celebrated far and near as being nothing less than marvellous, and a hundred of the richest and handsomest Kings and Princes in the world vied with each other in their endeavours to obtain her hand; but to not one of them would she deign to listen even for a moment, regarding all men as a sort of natural excrescence, whose only fitting place in the world was in companionship with the horses and dogs, or, at most, as ugly and repulsive creatures necessary for the performance of the most unpleasant labours. It was on this account that she had become universally known as "The Princess Who Despised All Men."

This state of things became, at last, a cause of extreme uneasiness to the King. By the time she had arrived at a marriageable age, the fact that he, too, was year by year growing older began to recur to his mind with disquieting persistency; for, having no son to succeed him, he saw that, if his daughter's disinclination to marry were maintained, his dynasty was in danger of coming to an end—and that is a prospect which no King can be expected to contemplate with equanimity.

One day, therefore, when the subject was worrying him very much, he sent for his wife and daughter and explained to them the extreme discomforts of the situation which had been brought about by the obduracy of the Princess.

"My daughter, I am happy to say, knows her duty to herself," replied the Queen proudly.

The King was about to retort, "But she does not appear to know anything whatever about her duty to her father"; but, as it was a rule of conduct with him never to use that form of contradiction in any discussion he had with his wife, he held his peace.

"Rather than become the wife of an ugly, coarse, bearded man, I would die a hundred deaths!" cried the Princess vehemently.

As the last syllable left her lips, a gay laugh rippled through the air of the room.

"May I ask what you find to laugh at in what my daughter has said?" demanded the Queen of her husband, indignantly.

"Nothing whatever, my dear—and, consequently, I did not laugh," replied the King mildly.

"What! Perhaps you will say that it was *I* who uttered that insolent sound?" cried the Queen.

"Now I come to recall the fact, I don't think I ever heard you laugh, my dear; but I am sure the voice that laughed a moment ago was not in the least like yours," said the King.

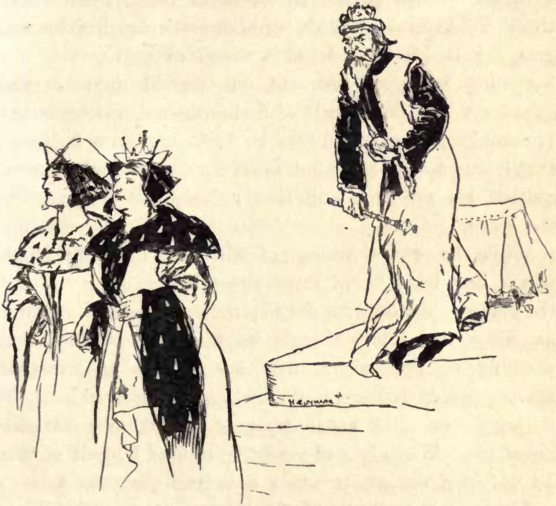
"It was more like my daughter's, perhaps you will say?" remarked the Queen sarcastically.

"Not in the least—I should imagine, for I never had the advantage of hearing her laugh any more than yourself," replied the King.

Again the gay sound of a musical voice, laughing lightly, rang through the room.

"Oh! This is too insulting!" cried the Queen. "Come with me, my love—out of such an unendurable atmosphere of coarseness."

And, without deigning to listen to a word of remonstrance from the King, she hurried the Princess back to her own apartment—followed by another silvery peal of laughter.



"SHE HURRIED THE PRINCESS BACK TO HER OWN APARTMENT."

The King was equally puzzled and vexed by the abrupt termination of what he had hoped would have been a conference resulting in relief to himself from pressing anxieties. Now—knowing his wife's absolute and unyielding temper, and the complete control she exercised over her daughter—he saw no way but one (that of using his extreme parental authority) to bring the Princess to obedience; but that measure he was too kind-hearted to resolve upon applying.

In the utmost perplexity of mind he had paced his study for several minutes, without noticing that he was grasping in his right hand a scroll of parchment. On becoming aware of this fact, he stopped suddenly and gazed on the document with bewildered astonishment. It was absolutely certain that he had never seen it before, that it was not in his hand when the Queen and Princess quitted his presence, and that nobody else had entered the room.

While he was thinking of all this, the gay laugh, which had been heard three times before, rang through the study again, only more gaily than ever—for a moment angering the King, though he was one of the most placable of Sovereigns, and causing him to ferret in every possible hiding-place in his study in search of the daring jester. But not a trace of an intruder was discoverable. When he had perfectly assured himself of this, he unfolded the mysteriously conveyed parchment.

The opening words of the document caused him to turn pale, and the sight of the signature at the end of it sent a thrill of terror through his frame. It was nothing less than a formal demand for the hand of the Princess Disdainana, on the part of Kloxoxskin the Ninety-ninth—one of the ugliest and most belligerent monarchs in the world—the document being drawn in the form of an ultimatum, calling upon the King to give his daughter to the said Kloxoxskin in marriage, within two hours of the receipt of this demand, or, failing compliance therewith, to surrender his throne to the said Kloxoxskin, who would, at the time specified, come, supported by his invincible army of one million nine hundred and ninety-nine veteran warriors, to receive the said King's answer.

In his moments of worst apprehension, the King had never thought of anything so terrible as this. He called his wife and daughter back to him, and made them clearly understand the crisis that had come to him and them; but though the Queen was inclined to save her share of the throne by submission, the Princess declared that no consideration would induce her to give herself to any man—to such a human monster as Kloxoxskin least of all.

From that resolution her father tried to move her, but she was inflexible against all his arguments and prayers; and when the two hours' grace was spent, the King found himself in the presence of the redoubtable Kloxoxskin the Ninety-ninth, a prisoner in his palace, and wholly at the mercy of his all-powerful conqueror.

Realising the peril in which she stood, the Queen did her best to persuade her daughter to submit to the inevitable; but the Princess quickly silenced her by giving her back the arguments that had all her life been used in the cultivation of her detestation of all men.

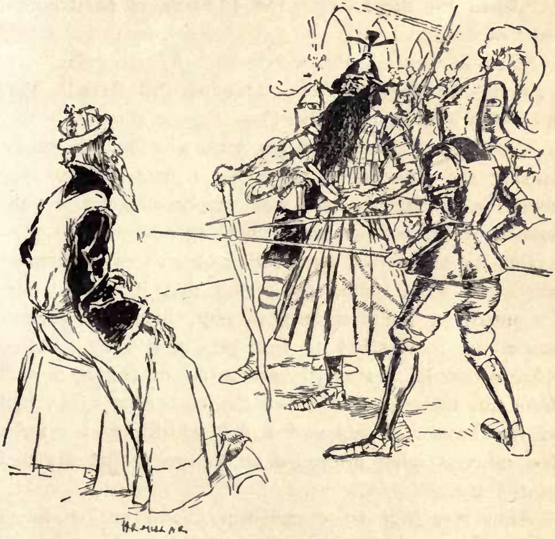
But though she had no misgiving as to her moral strength, the Princess could not but contemplate with alarm the danger of a personal encounter with King Kloxoxskin, so she determined to seek safety in flight and, as soon as dusk came, contrived to slip unperceived from the palace into a dense forest which grew at no great distance from the walls of her father's capital.

For a long time she pressed farther and farther into the depths of the forest, growing every moment more and more relieved from the apprehension that she might be pursued.

Pausing at length to rest, she noticed that night had thoroughly set in, and that it would be impossible for her to go any farther in the darkness. At the same moment a terrible sound fell upon her ears—the roaring of wild beasts of some kind, coming rapidly nearer and nearer. For an instant her heart stood still, but she was not wanting in courage or resource, and, observing that she was at the foot of a giant oak tree, she lost not a moment in climbing to the shelter of its spreading boughs.

Choosing the securest position she could find, her alarm of the moment subsided; but though she was greatly fatigued, the memory of the peril from which she was endeavouring to escape, coupled with anxiety as to the trials which might be awaiting her all night, prevented her from going to sleep; and, when morning dawned, she prepared, tired and hungry, to descend to the ground and continue her undefined journey.

But she found that climbing was a far easier matter than descending from her place of refuge; for she now observed that the tree sent out, on nearly all sides of its gnarled trunk, the remains of huge jagged and lifeless branches, to avoid which would require a skill which she did not possess. She had no choice, however, but to make an attempt to get down, and had nearly succeeded in reaching the ground when, to her consternation, the full skirt of her splendid dress caught upon an enormous splinter, and held her hanging helpless some feet in the air, all her efforts to free herself proving unavailing.



"AT THE MERCY OF HIS ALL-POWERFUL CONQUEROR" (*p.* 265).

Hours passed by. The sunlight pierced some of the neighbouring tree-tops; but the return of day brought her neither comfort nor the hope of release, and she was giving way to the horrible idea that she would have to endure all the torments of a lingering death, when she heard the voice of a woodman, whistling on his way to his work, and called to him.

The man came towards her out of the underwood.

"Assist me down," said the Princess, in her habitual tone of disdain.

"Not I," replied the woodman. "I recognise you: you are the Princess Who Despises All Men! Ho! ho!—*I'm* a man, remember!"

That said, he went on his way, whistling cheerfully, leaving the Princess to think, for a moment, that her rooted antipathy to men was amply justified by the brutal conduct of this coarse and ugly wretch.

But the distress of her position became every moment more and more acute, and, seeing that it was hopeless to anticipate the assistance of any chance passer, she made one more effort to free herself, and by exerting all her remaining strength, succeeded in tearing herself from the offensive bough—at the cost of a great rent in her beautiful dress and a fall, which left her for a few minutes lying insensible on the ground at the foot of the tree.

After returning to consciousness, and sitting for a while to recover her presence of mind, she rose and continued her blind way through the forest, always hungry and many times faint with fatigue, all day long, until once again she found the shades of evening closing about her.

Just before night had actually come, she reached a spot at which a party of charcoal-burners were seated about a cheerful fire in front of their hut, eating their supper of bread and potatoes, roasted in the embers at their feet. The appetising scents of these well-cooked roots provoked the starving Princess's hunger in an almost unendurable degree.

"Give me one of your potatoes," she said, still unable to modify the disdainful tone of her voice.

"Not we!" replied the head charcoal-burner. "I recognise you: you are the Princess Who Despises All Men! Ho! ho! *We* are men, remember!"

More than ever disgusted with men, the Princess wandered all night through the forest, afraid to lie down, lest she might fall asleep and become a prey to some prowling wild beast.

As the dawn of another day was becoming visible, she found herself on the border of a meadow, and saw a young farmer drawing water from a well for some horses which were waiting near him.

"Give me some of that water—I'm thirsty!" she said imperiously.

"Aha," said the young farmer, "I recognise you: you are the Princess Who Despises All Men! If you want water, dig a well for yourself, as I have had to do."

"Loathsome creatures, one and all!" the Princess said to herself, as she turned away from the spot. "My good mother was right in teaching me to despise them."

She presently reached a more open part of the country, though she was still near the forest through which she had passed, and, towards noon, when she was almost overcome by the sun's heat, she came upon a rising ground, whence she beheld, afar off, a great stretch of water, and, on what seemed its most distant reach, an opalesque haze.

Then there suddenly came to her mind a story she had heard of the existence of an island-kingdom peopled by women who, like herself, held all men in disdain, and would never permit one of them to set foot where they were. And she was overtaken by a burning desire to reach that island, which she fancied must be hidden in the midst of the opalesque haze on which she was gazing.

So she hurried on and on, sustained wholly by the intensity of her desire, till she came upon the sea-shore —for the great water she had looked upon was the wide ocean.

Alongside his boat, and busy with his nets, she found a fisherman, and at once accosted him.

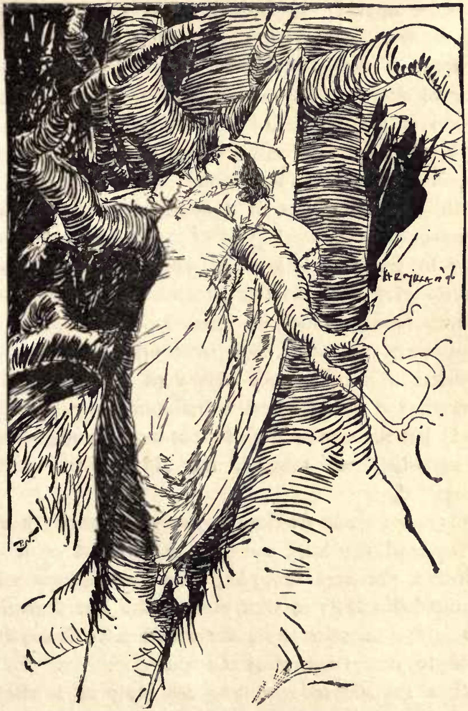
"Is yonder mist-enveloped island the kingdom of Diaphanosia?" she asked him.

"Yes," he answered.

"Then row me over to it in your boat," she said eagerly.

"Not I," he replied. "I recognise you: you are the Princess Who Despises All men, and *I* am a man, you know. If you want a boat, make one for yourself, as I had to do. Over there, in the forest, you will find plenty of wood for your purpose, only you will have to cut it down."

To get out of the sun's burning rays, and to give herself time for reflection, the Princess retired into the forest and sat down at the foot of a hollow tree, by the side of which a rusty axe was lying, as if it had been left there by some woodman and forgotten.



"THE DISTRESS OF HER POSITION BECAME EVERY MOMENT MORE ACUTE" (*p.* 268).

Strange! A merry laugh came out of the thicket near to her; but though she searched with her eyes in every direction she could discover nobody who could have given it utterance.

Strange again! It flashed upon her mind that the mere expression of disdain for men was wanting in force if it were not emphasised by the demonstration of woman's power to do absolutely without them.

Upon the strength of this reasoning, she at once seized the axe, and after many days of hard work, succeeded in felling the hollow tree and giving to it something of the shape of a boat, in which, by the aid of a roughly fashioned pair of oars, she rowed herself across to the island-kingdom, where she hoped to find the realisation of all her aspirations for a state of existence in which men were wholly ignored.

Not once or twice, but over and over again, she succeeded in reaching the border of the opalesque haze in which the kingdom of Diaphanosia was perpetually veiled; but she was as often beaten back by an irresistible current which set towards the shore from which she had started.

On one of these fruitless voyages her strength utterly left her, and she sank down in the bottom of her boat insensible, the oars dropping from her nerveless hands and drifting away; so that, even if she had immediately returned to consciousness, she would have found herself helplessly at the mercy of the sea.

When she *did* recover from her state of insensibility, it was to discover herself lying upon a mossy bank on the skirt of the forest, a handsome and superbly dressed young man tending her with delicately eager solicitude.

She did not attempt to rise or to speak; she thought she was sleeping and dreaming—the only thing strange in her state of feeling being that the near presence of a man provoked no sense of repugnance or resentment.

"Thank Heaven!" said the young gentleman, in a tone of intense relief, as he saw her open her eyes. "For awhile I have been terribly afraid that my efforts to rescue you had been unavailing."

Still held by the idea that she was dreaming, the Princess only continued to look into his face without replying to his words.

"Rest here for a short time, and sleep if you can, while I watch over you," he continued. "When you have become strong enough to travel, my horse shall carry you to my father's palace, which stands not very far from this spot: once there, my mother will be delighted to tend upon you as if you were her own daughter."

"Take me to your kind mother," she said, rising, the soft tones of her own voice sounding in her ears as if they came from the lips of some other person than herself.

The handsome young Prince—for he was no less—blew a golden whistle suspended to his neck by a jewelled chain, and in a few moments a splendidly caparisoned horse came to him from out the forest.

Upon the back of this noble steed the Prince gallantly lifted his beautiful charge, and taking the bridle on his hand, led him through the forest openings, walking by the Princess's side and relating to her how, while hunting, it had been his blest fortune to see her helpless condition in her boat, and, by swimming out to her, rescue her at the moment when her rude vessel was on the point of sinking with her beneath the waves.

She listened silently to all he said to her, filled with an inexplicable sense of wonder at herself in finding that ever the voice of a man could fall sympathetically on her ears! "I *must* be dreaming!" she said to herself again and again.

At last, on reaching an eminence, the Prince pointed to a noble pile of buildings on the outskirts of a great city, and said—something of sadness coming into the tone of his voice:

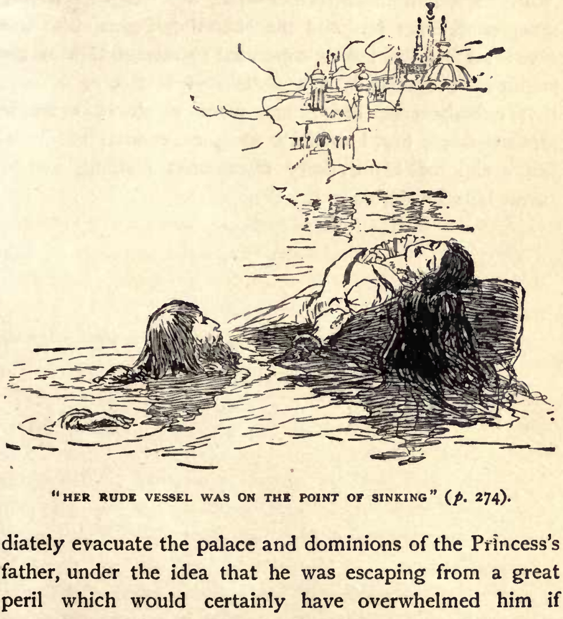
"Yonder is my father's palace; we shall reach it in a very little time—and then the happy privilege of these delightful moments will cease to be mine, never to be renewed, perhaps."

All things about her seemed, at the sound of those words, to melt into a roseate mist, carrying with them all sense of herself. Apart from her will, unconsciously, she held out her hand to her preserver, who pressed it to his lips with tender gratitude.

Clearly and with wonderful sweetness of intonation, the gay laugh which had greeted her on so many eventful moments of her life once more rang in the Princess's ears.

"Ah! I recognise it now!" she cried—"the sweet voice of my fairy godmother! Oh, wise and kind Gaieia, still be my guardian, as you have ever been, and make me in the future all that I have failed to make myself in the past!"

The laugh that answered her entreaty was as gay and sweet as ever, but came from afar; for, in fact, the good fairy had sped away, having a great deal still to do for her froward godchild, and that without delay: amongst other things to make King Kloxoxskin immediately evacuate the palace and dominions of the Princess's father, under the idea that he was escaping from a great peril which would certainly have overwhelmed him if he had persisted in forcing the Princess Disdainana to marry him.



"HER RUDE VESSEL WAS ON THE POINT OF SINKING" (*p.* 274).

More than that—a task much more difficult to accomplish—the merry fairy had to overcome the prejudice of the Queen, whose obstinacy had returned in full force as soon as she was once again able to exercise it on the side of her anti-matrimonial fancies. But, as everybody knows, nothing can permanently withstand the power and strategy of a good fairy; so it came about—really as a matter of course—that, her daughter having accepted for her husband the charming Prince who had saved her life, the Queen consented to receive him as her son-in-law; and it is a well-attested matter of history, that nobody ever heard her utter a single word in dissent from her husband's freely-expressed delight at the saving of his dynasty from what had, for awhile, seemed its inevitable extinction.

The Necklace of Tears.

THE NECKLACE of TEARS.

By Mrs. Egerton Eastwick.

ONCE, many years ago, there lived in Ombrelande a most beautiful Princess. Now, Ombrelande is a country which still exists, and in which many strange things still happen, although it is not to be found in any map of the world that I know of.

The Princess, at the time the story begins, was little more than a child, and while her growing beauty was everywhere spoken of, she was unfortunately still more noted for her selfish and disagreeable nature. She cared for nothing but her own amusement and pleasure, and gave no thought to the pain she sometimes inflicted on others in order to gratify her whims. It must be mentioned, however, as an excuse for her heartlessness, that, being an only child, she had been spoilt from her babyhood, and always allowed to have her own way, while those who thwarted her were punished.

One day the Princess Olga, that was her name, escaped from her governess and attendants, and wandered into the wood which joined the gardens of the palace. It was her fancy to be alone; she would not even allow her faithful dachshund to bear her company.

The air was soft with the coming of spring; the sun was shining, the songs of the birds were full of gratitude and joy; the most lovely flowers, in all imaginable hues, turned the earth into a jewelled nest of verdure.

Olga threw herself down on a bank, bright with green moss and soft as a downy pillow. The warmth and her wanderings had already wearied her. She had neglected her morning studies, and left her singing-master waiting for her in despair in the music-room of the palace, that she might wander into the wood, and already the pleasure was gone.

She threw herself down on the bank and wished she was at home. There was one thing, however, of which she never tired, and that was her own beauty; so now, having nothing to do, and finding the world and the morning exceedingly tiresome and tame and dull, she unbound her long golden hair, and spread it all around her like a carpet over the moss and the flowers, that she might admire its softness and luxuriance, by way of a change.

She held up the yellow meshes in her hands and drew them through her fingers, laughing to see the golden lights that played among the silky waves in the sunlight;

then she fell to admiring the small white hands which held the treasure, holding them up against the light to see their almost transparent delicacy, and the pretty rose-pink lines where the fingers met. Certainly she made a charming picture, there in the sunshine among the flowers: the picture of a lovely innocent child, if she had been less vain and self-conscious.

Presently she heard a slight rustle of boughs behind her, and looking round she saw that she was no longer alone. Not many paces away, gazing at her with admiring wonder, stood a youth in the dress of a beggar, and over his shoulder looked the face of a young girl, which Olga was forced to acknowledge as lovely as her own. Now, the forest was the private property of the King, and the presence of these poor-looking people was certainly an intrusion.

"What are you doing here?" said Olga haughtily. "Don't you know that you are trespassing? This wood belongs to the King, and is forbidden to tramps and beggars."

"We are no beggars, lady," said the youth. He spoke with great gentleness, but his voice was strong and sweet as a deep-toned bell. "To us no land is forbidden—and we own allegiance to no one."

"My father will have you put in prison," said Olga angrily. "What is your name?"

"My name is Kasih."

"And that girl behind you—she is hiding—why does she not come forward?"

"It is Kasukah—my sister," he said, looking round with a smile; "she is shy, and frightened, perhaps."

"What outlandish names! You must be gypsies," said Olga rudely, "and perhaps thieves."

"Indeed, lady, you are mistaken; on the contrary, it is in our power to bestow upon you many priceless gifts. But we have travelled far to find you, and are weary; only bid us welcome—let us go with you to the castle to rest—Kasukah——"

"How dare you speak so to me?" interrupted Olga, in a fury. "To the castle, indeed—what are you thinking of? There is a poor-house somewhere, I have heard the people say, maintained by my father's bounty out of the taxes, you can go there. Go at once—or——"

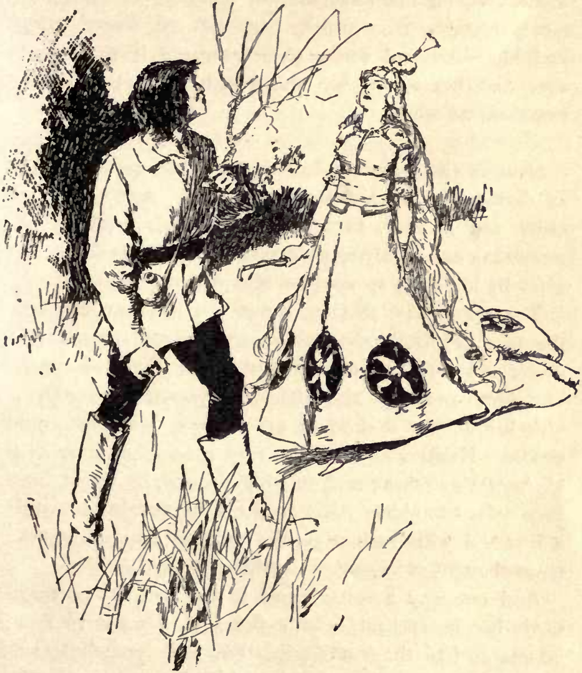
She raised the little silver-handled dog-whip which hung at her girdle. To do her justice, she was no coward. Kasukah had quite disappeared; the boy stood alone looking at Olga with sad, reproachful eyes. For a moment, she thought what a pity he was so poor and shabby; he had the face and bearing of a king. But she was too proud to change her tone.

"Or what?" he said.

"I will drive you away," she said defiantly. Still Kasih did not move, and the next moment she had struck him smartly across the cheek with the whip.

He made no effort at self-defence or retaliation, only it seemed to her that she herself felt the pain of the wound. For a few instants she saw his sorrowful face grown white and stern, and the red, glowing scar which her whip had caused; then, like Kasukah, he seemed to vanish, and disappeared among the trees, while where he had stood a sunbeam crossed the grass.

Olga felt rather scared. She had been certainly very audacious, and it was odd that the boy should have shown no resentment. After all, she rather wished she had



"GO AT ONCE" (*p.* 282).

asked both him and his sister to stay, they might have proved amusing.

However, it was too late now; she could not call them back; so she thought she would return to the castle; she was beginning to feel hungry. So she went leisurely home, and, for the remainder of the day, proved a little more tractable than usual. She did not forget Kasih and his sister, and for a time wondered if they would ever seek her again; but the months went by and she saw them no more.

Now, as Olga grew older, of course the question arose of finding for her a desirable husband. And one suitor came and another, but none pleased her; and, indeed, more than one highly eligible young Prince was frightened away by her haughty manners and violent temper.

The truth was, that in secret she had not forgotten the face of Kasih, and she sometimes told herself that if she could find among her suitors one who was at all like him, and was also rich and powerful enough to give her all she desired in other ways, him she would choose. Kasih was certainly very handsome, in spite of his beggar's clothes; and, suitably dressed, he would have been quite adorable. Also, it would be delightful to find a husband with such a gentle, yielding disposition, who never thought of resenting anything she said or did.

And one day a suitor came to the palace who really made her heart beat a little faster than usual at first; he was so like the lost Kasih. But unfortunately he was only the younger son of a Royal Duke, and could offer her nothing better than a small, insignificant Principality and an income hardly sufficient to pay her dressmaker's bills. So it was no use thinking about him, and he was dismissed with the others. Olga's father began to think his daughter would never find all she required in a husband, but would remain for ever in the ancestral castle: as every year she grew more disagreeable, the prospect did not afford him entire satisfaction.

At length, however, appeared a very powerful Prince, who peremptorily demanded her hand. He was a big, strong man, and carried on his wooing in such a masterful manner that even Olga was a little afraid of him. At the same time he loaded her with jewels and beautiful presents of all kinds, brought from his own country. He was said to possess fabulous wealth; and, partly because she feared him, and partly because of her pride and ambition, haughty Olga surrendered and promised to become his wife. Having once gained her consent, Hazil would brook no delay.

The date was immediately fixed, and the grandest possible preparations made for the wedding. No expense was spared, innumerable guests were invited, while those less favoured among the people came from far and near to see the bride's wedding clothes and to bring her presents. Indeed, the King of Ombrelande was forced to add a new suite of rooms to the castle to contain the wedding gifts and display them to the best advantage.

Such a sight as the bridal train had never been seen before, for it was spangled all over with diamonds so closely that Olga when she moved looked like a living jewel—and her veil was sprinkled with diamond dust, which sparkled like myriads of tiny stars.

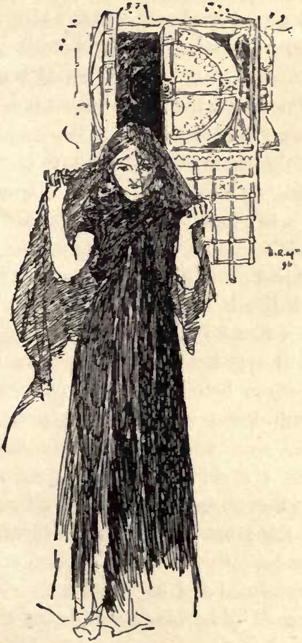
The evening before the wedding day Olga sat alone in her chamber, thinking of the magnificence that awaited her, also a little of Hazil, the bridegroom. She had that day seen Hazil, in a passion, punish, with his own hands, a servant for disobedience, and the sight had displeased her. It had been an ugly and unpleasant exhibition, but worse than all, the sight of the poor man's wounds had recalled that livid mark across the fair cheek of Kasih which she herself had wrought. The boy's gentle face, which had become so stern when they parted, the laughing eyes of Kasukah, quite haunted her to-night. She thought she would like to make amends for her rudeness ; if she knew where they were, she would ask brother and sister to her wedding. And just as she was so thinking, a soft tap sounded at the door, and before she could ask who was there (she thought it must surely be the Queen, her mother, come to bid her a last good-night, and felt rather displeased at the interruption) the door opened, and a stranger entered the room.

Olga saw a tall figure, draped from head to foot in a soft darkness that shrouded her like a cloud, obscuring even her face.

"Who are you ?" said Olga, "and what do you want in my private apartments ? Who dared admit you without my leave ?"

"I asked admittance of no one, for none can refuse me or bar my way," answered the stranger, in a voice like the sighing of soft winds at night. "My name is Kasuhama—I am the foster-sister of Kasukah and Kasih, of whom you were just now thinking, and I come to bring you a wedding gift."

She withdrew her veil slightly as she spoke, and Olga saw a pale, serene face, sorrowful in expression, and framed with snow-white hair, but yet bearing a likeness, that was like a memory, to Kasih and Kasukah.



"I COME TO BRING YOU A WEDDING GIFT" (*p.* 286).

"I wish," said Olga petulantly, "that Kasih had brought it to-morrow and been present at our feast. I would have seen that he was properly attired for the occasion.

Your sad face is hardly suitable for a wedding feast. Shall I ever see him again?"

"As to that, I cannot answer," said Kasuhama gravely; "but your wedding is no place either for him or Kasukah. As for me—I go everywhere. I am older in appearance than the others, you see, though, in reality, it is not so. But that is because they have immortal souls and I have none. The time will come when I must bid them farewell. We but journey together for a time."

The air of the room seemed to have become strangely chill and cold, and Olga shivered. "I am tired," she said, "and I wish to rest. Will you state your business and leave me?"

Experience had made her less abruptly rude than when she dismissed Kasih in the wood; also this cold, pale, soulless woman struck her with something like awe.

"Yes,—I will say farewell to you now. In the future you will know me better and perhaps learn not to fear me—but I will leave with you the present I came to bring."

She held out a necklace of pearls more wonderful than even Olga had ever seen. They were large and round, lustrous and fair; but as Olga took them in her hands it seemed to her that, in their mysterious depths, each jewel held imprisoned a living soul.

"Wear them," said Kasuhama; "by them you will remember me."

Almost involuntarily Olga raised her hands and fastened the necklace around her slender throat. The clasps just met, and the pearls glistened like dewdrops on her bosom —or were they tears?

But in the centre of the necklace was a vacant space.

"There is one lost!" she said.

"Not lost, but missing," answered Kasuhama softly. "One day the place will be filled, and the necklace will be complete." And with these words she waved her hand to Olga, and, drawing her dusky veil around her, quitted the room as quietly as she had entered.

The ceremonies of the following day passed off without let or hindrance, and Olga, dazzled by her grandeur, would have thought little of her visitor of the previous night—would indeed have believed the incident a dream, a trick of the imagination—but for the necklace. It still encircled her throat, for her utmost efforts proved unavailing to unfasten the clasps, and every one stared and marvelled at the wonderful pearls which seemed endowed with a curious fascination.

Only Prince Hazil was displeased; for he could not bear his bride to wear jewels not his gift, and that outshone by their lustre any he could produce; also, he was jealous of the unknown giver. When the wedding was over, and they were travelling away to the distant castle where the first weeks of Olga's new life were to be spent, he tried to take the jewels from their resting-place. Olga smiled, for she knew that even his great strength would be unavailing, and so it proved; and although on reaching their destination Hazil sent for all the Court jewellers, neither then nor at any other time could the most experienced among them loosen Kasuhama's magic gift from its place.

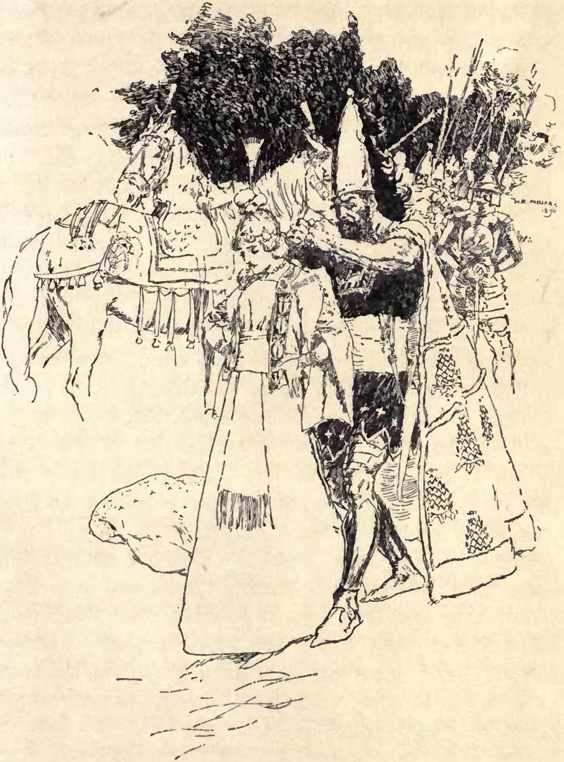
The months rolled by, and Olga reigned a Queen in her husband's country, but her life was a sad one. Hazil was often cruel, and it seemed as though he were bent upon heaping upon her all the contumely and harshness she had shown to others. Still her proud spirit refused to yield. She met him with defiance in secret, and openly bore herself with so much cold haughtiness that no one dared to hint at her trouble, much less to offer her any sympathy.

But when alone in her chamber she saw again the faces of Kasih and Kasukah; but more often that of Kasuhama. For the necklace was still there to remind her; the pearls still shone with mysterious, undimmed lustre; indeed, they seemed to grow more numerous, and to be woven into more delicate and intricate designs, as time went on. Still, however, the place for the central jewel remained unfilled. Often Olga herself tried with passionate, almost agonising, effort to break their fatal chain, for every day their weight grew heavier, until she seemed to bear fetters of iron about her fair throat, and when the pearls touched her they burned as though the iron were molten.

Still, in public, they were universally admired, and gratified vanity enabled her to bear the pain and inconvenience without open complaint.

But one day was placed in her arms another treasure—a beautiful living child, and she was so fair that they called her Pearl, but the Queen hated the name. The child, however, found a soft place in Hazil's rough nature; indeed, he idolised her; but Olga rarely saw her little daughter, and left her altogether to the care of the nurses and attendants.

So little Pearl grew very fragile, and had a wistful look in her blue eyes, as though waiting for something



"HE TRIED TO TAKE THE JEWELS FROM THEIR RESTING-PLACE" (*p.* 289).

that never came; for in her grand nurseries and among all her beautiful playthings she found no mother-love to perfect and nourish her life.

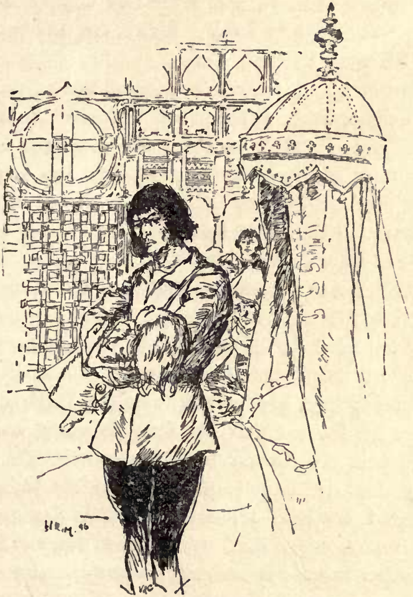
And all this time Olga had seen no more of Kasih or Kasukah; had, indeed, almost forgotten what their faces were like. But one night, at the close of a grand entertainment, she was summoned in haste to the nursery. The Court physician came to tell her that little Pearl was ill.

Olga was very weary. Never had the necklace seemed so heavy a burden as that night, or the Court functions so endless. She rose, however, and followed the physician at once. Hazil, the King, was far away, visiting a distant part of his great territory; he would be terribly angry if anything went wrong with little Pearl during his absence.

She reached the room where the child lay on her lace-covered pillows, very white and small, but with a happy smile on her tiny face, a happy light in her blue eyes, which looked satisfied at last. But Olga knew that the smile was not for her, that the child did not recognise her, would never know her any more.

Some one else stood beside the couch: a stranger with bent head and loving, out-stretched arms, and little Pearl prattled in baby language of playthings and flowers and sunlight and green fields. Olga drew near and watched, helpless and terrified, with a strange despair at her heart. And soon the little voice grew weaker—but the happy smile deepened as the blue eyes closed.

And there was a great silence in the nursery. The stranger lifted the little form in his arms, and as he raised his head Olga saw his face, and she knew that it was Kasih come at last, for across his cheek still glowed the red line of the wound which her hand had dealt many years before. His eyes met hers with the same



"THE STRANGER LIFTED THE LITTLE FORM IN HIS ARMS" (*p.* 292).

stern sadness of reproach as when they had parted—then she remembered no more.

When the Queen recovered from her swoon they told her that her little daughter was dead; but she knew that Kasih had taken her. She said no word and showed few signs of grief, but remained outwardly proud and cold, though her heart was wrung with a pain and fear she could not understand. She was full of wrath against Kasih, who, she thought, had taken this way of avenging the old insult she had offered him. Yet the sorrowful look in his eyes haunted her.

The pearls about her neck pressed upon her with a heavier weight, and in her sleep she saw them as in a vision, and in their depths she discerned strange pictures: faces she had known years ago and long since forgotten, the faces of those whom her pride and harshness had caused to suffer, who had appealed to her for love and pity and were denied.

And then in her dream she understood that the pearls were in truth the tears of those she had made sorrowful, kept and guarded by Kasih in his treasure-house, but given to her by Kasuhama to be her punishment.

Before many days had passed, the King Hazil returned, and when he learned that his little daughter was dead, he summoned the Queen to his presence. Olga went haughtily, for she dared not altogether disobey. Then Hazil loaded her with reproaches, and in his anger he told her many, many hard things, and the words sank deep into her heart. It seemed, presently, that she could bear no more, and hardly knowing what she did, she cast herself at his feet and prayed for mercy.

She asked him to remember that the child had been hers also—that she had loved it. But Hazil, in his bitterness, laughed in her face and told her she was a monster, that it was for lack of her love that the child had died · that she had never loved anything—not even herself. He turned away to nurse his own grief, and Olga dragged herself up and went away to the silent room, and knelt by the little couch where she had seen Kasih take away her child.

And there at length the blessed tears fell, for she was humbled at last, and sorry, and quite desolate and alone. And it seemed to her that through her tears she once more saw Kasih, and that he held towards her the little Pearl, more beautiful than ever, and the child put its arms about her neck, and she was comforted.

Well, from that day the life of the Queen was changed. When next she looked at the pearl necklace she found that a jewel, more beautiful than any of the others, had been added to it; and she knew that the tear of her humiliation had filled the vacant place.

And henceforth she often saw the face of Kasih: near the bed of the dying, beside all who needed consolation, kindness, and love, there she met him constantly. Near him sometimes she caught a glimpse of bright Kasukah, but for a while, more often of Kasuhama.

The face of the white-haired sister, however, had grown very gentle and kind, and she whispered of a time when Kasukah should take her place for ever—for Love and Joy are eternal, but Sorrow has an end. And with every act of unselfish kindness and love that the Queen Olga performed the weight and burden of the necklace grew less, until the day that it fell from her of its own accord, and she was able to give it back to Kasuhama. And Hazil, the King, seeing how greatly Olga was changed, in time grew gentle towards her, and loved her; for Kasuhama softened his heart.

The Prince and the Lions.

THE PRINCE AND THE LIONS

From the Persian.

IN an Eastern city there once lived a young Prince named Azgid. He was virtuous and accomplished, but had one fault—he was a bit of a coward!

Prince Azgid's father had recently died, and he was looking forward to his coronation. A few days before the day fixed for the ceremony, the old Vizier called upon the Prince and informed His Royal Highness that before he could ascend the throne he must in accordance with an ancient custom, fight a certain huge red lion which was kept in a den within the precincts of the palace.

The Prince, upon hearing this, was so frightened that he made up his mind to run away. He rose in the night, dressed himself hastily, mounted his horse, and left the city. Thus he journeyed for three days.

In the course of the third day, as he rode through a beautiful thickly-wooded country, he heard the sound of exquisite music, and presently overtook a handsome youth, who was leading a few sheep, and playing upon a flute.

The young man having courteously saluted the stranger, Prince Azgid begged him to go on playing, for never in his life before, said the Prince, had he listened to such enchanting strains.

The player then told Azgid that he was the slave of the wealthy shepherd named Oaxus, to whose abode, which was close at hand, he offered to conduct the traveller.

The Prince gladly accepted this invitation, and in a few moments was entering the house of Oaxus, who accorded him a hearty welcome, and placed food and drink before him. When Azgid had finished his meal, he felt it incumbent upon him to make some sort of explanation to his host.

"Doubtless," said he, "you wonder who I am, and what is my errand in coming hither? I can tell you this much—that I am a Prince whom trouble has driven from home. Pardon me if I do not divulge my name; that is a secret which must be securely locked within my own breast. If convenient to you, I would gladly remain in this delightsome spot. I have ample means, and can remunerate you for your kindness."

Oaxus assured his guest that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to entertain him for as long a period as he cared to stay, and he begged him not to think of offering any remuneration.

"And now, Isdril," added Oaxus, addressing his slave, "show the Prince our fountains and waterfalls, our rocks and vales, for I perceive that he is one who can appreciate Nature's beauties."

The youth took up his flute and went out with the Prince.

After wandering awhile amidst romantic scenery, the two young men sat down to rest upon a rock in a shady valley. The slave put his flute to his lips, and began to play. The prince loved music passionately, and the idea had already occurred to him that, if he ever left this fair retreat, he would like to purchase from Oaxus his accomplished slave.

Suddenly Isdril broke the spell of the Prince's enjoyment by rising to his feet, with the words: "It is time for us to be going."

"Wherefore?" queried the Prince. "Why should we quit this delicious spot so soon?"

"Because," replied the other, "the neighbourhood is infested with lions. It is well, therefore, to retire early within our abodes, and close the gates. Upon one occasion I lagged behind, and see the consequence!"

He rolled up his sleeve and revealed a big scar upon his arm. Azgid turned pale, and upon reaching the house, informed his host that he had changed his mind and found himself obliged to ride on farther. He thanked Oaxus, bade farewell to him and to Isdril, and galloped off.

Again he journeyed for three days, and came to a vast desert, in the midst of which he beheld an Arab encampment.

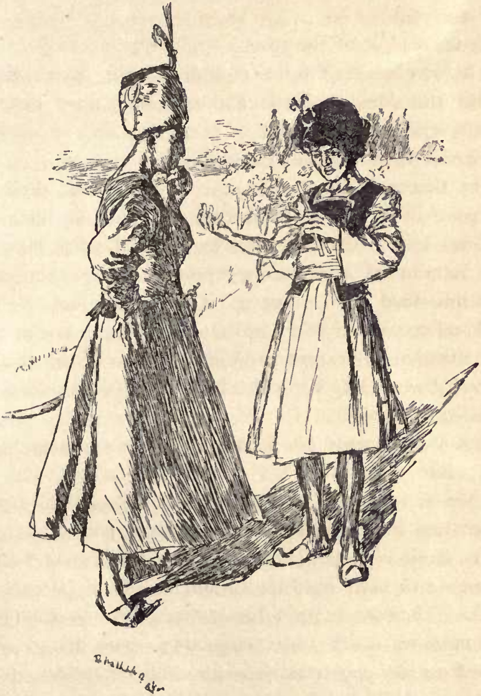
Thankfully he rode up to the black tents, for both he and his horse were worn out with hunger and fatigue.

He was received by a dignified Sheik, to whom he made the same speech that he had addressed to the kindly Oaxus.

Sheik Hajaar, like the shepherd, answered to the effect that he desired no other remuneration than the pleasure of the Prince's society, and that he should be delighted to keep his guest for ever, if so it might be. He introduced Azgid to a large number of his friends, and provided for his use a magnificent steed.

A week passed. Day by day the Prince accompanied the Sheik in his antelope-hunting expeditions, which he enjoyed exceedingly. He quite thought that he was now happily settled for life, when one night, after he had retired to rest, Sheik Hajaar approached his couch, and said:

"My son, I have come to tell you how pleased my people are with you, more especially with the spirit you have shown in the chase. But our life is not wholly taken up in such easy recreations; we frequently engage in hard fighting with other tribes. All my men are seasoned warriors, and before they can have perfect confidence in you it is necessary that they should have some proof of your prowess. Two leagues to the south is a range of hills infested with lions. Go, then, early in the morning, mounted upon your horse, and armed with sword and spear. Slay one of these fierce beasts and bring us his skin; so shall we know that we may rely upon you in the day of battle."



"HE ROLLED UP HIS SLEEVE AND REVEALED A BIG SCAR" (*p.* 301).

When the Sheik had left him, Azgid rose, dressed himself, slipped quietly out of his tent, and bade a sorrowful, affectionate farewell to the horse which the Sheik had allowed him to use, now tethered with the others. Then he mounted his own steed, and rode forth into the night.

By the middle of the next day, he was rejoiced to find that he was leaving the desert, and entering a fair region of hill and dale, meadows and streams. Soon he came to a splendid palace, built of porphyry, and standing in the midst of a magnificent garden.

The owner of the palace, a rich Emir, was sitting in the porch, with his golden-haired daughter, Perizide.

Here, again, the Prince was most kindly received. The interior of the building proved to be even more beautiful than the exterior. The rooms blazed with gold and precious stones; walls and ceilings were covered with valuable paintings; the windows were of the costliest stained glass. The Emir set before his guest a collection of delicate viands.

The Prince made his accustomed speech, avowing his rank, but concealing his name. He added also his customary request, that he might be allowed to remain for a time in the house of his present entertainer.

The Emir replied politely that the prince was heartily welcome to remain until the end of his life, if he chose to do so. Then he begged his guest to excuse him for a few minutes, as he was expecting some friends, and wished to make preparations for their reception.

Thus Azgid was left alone with Perizide, with whom he was already in love. She took him into the garden, after exploring the beauties of which the pair returned to the house.

The palace, now illuminated from top to bottom, was full of company. The evening passed merrily. Observing a lute which lay upon a couch, the music-loving young Prince begged Perizide to play to him. In the midst of his enjoyment, however, he was startled by a strange, loud sound, and asked his fair companion what it might be.

"Oh!" replied she, with a laugh, "that is only Boulak, our black porter, indulging in a yawn."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Azgid; "what uncommonly good lungs he must have!"

After the other guests had left, and Perizide had gone to bed, the Emir and the Prince chatted and smoked together for some time. By-and-by, the former offered to conduct the latter to his sleeping apartment. When they came to the foot of the grand staircase, which was of white marble, Azgid, looking up, was horrified to behold an enormous black lion stretched upon the topmost landing.

"What is that?" faltered he.

"That," returned his host, "is Boulak, our black porter. He is a tame lion, and will not harm you, if you are not afraid of him. He knows when any one fears him and then becomes ferocious."

"I fear him greatly!" whispered the Prince.

As he could not be persuaded to mount the stairs, he had to return to the saloon, and repose upon one of the divans.

After the Emir had left him, Azgid carefully locked the door and fastened the windows. Then he lay down, but not to sleep. For he could hear the lion walking about, and once the beast actually came to the door, and uttering a terrific roar, sprang against it with his fore-paws.

The poor Prince made sure that the door would burst open, and that he should be devoured. Nothing of the kind happened, however. In a few moments Boulak went upstairs, and came down no more that night.

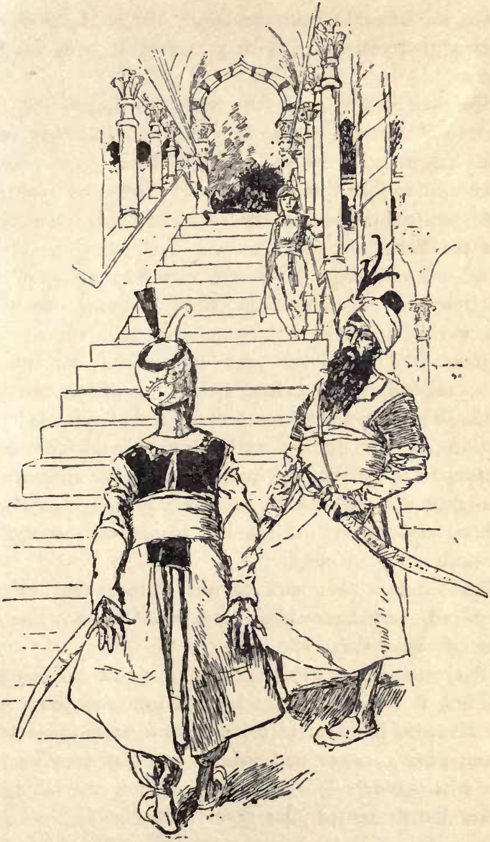
Azgid lay thinking. Evidently he had flown in the face of Providence when he had fled from the lion at home. Since then, lions had met him at every turn. He resolved to submit to what was so clearly his destined duty—to return home and fulfil the condition required.

In the morning, therefore, he told the Emir the whole truth. The kind old man had been acquainted with Azgid's father, the King Almamoun. He highly approved of the young man's resolution, and, with a parting blessing, sped him on his way. But the Prince had no opportunity of making his adieux to the fair Perizide.

Then Azgid rode back to the Arab camp, and confessed all to the good Sheik Hajaar. He also inquired after the beautiful horse.

"He is well," replied the other, "and I should be gratified if you could stay with us and use him again But it would be wrong to hinder you from your pious, undertaking. Return to your home, and do your duty like a man."

Azgid next visited Oaxus, to whom, as to the others, he revealed his name and parentage, confessed his fault, and expressed his repentance.



"I FEAR HIM GREATLY!" (*p.* 305).

"Go, my friend!" said the kindly shepherd, "and may Heaven give you strength to persevere in your laudable resolution!"

"Farewell!" answered Azgid; "greet Isdril from me, and tell him that I hope some day to return and listen to his sweet music in spite of the lions."

Without further interruption, the Prince rode straight home, and announced to the old Vizier his intention to fight the lion.

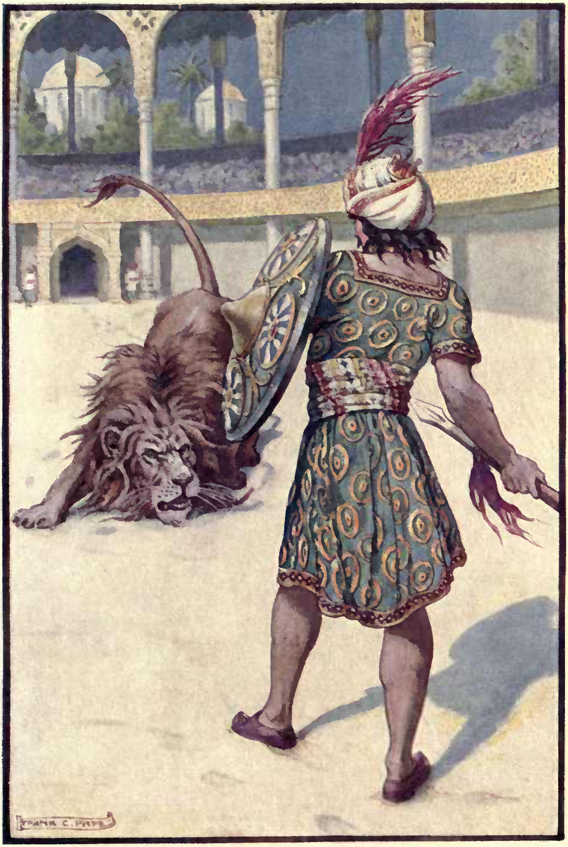
The old man wept tears of joy at his Prince's return, and it was arranged that the combat should take place in a week's time.

When the hour came, and the Prince entered the arena, the lion gave a loud roar, and approached his opponent slowly, with fierce looks. Azgid did not quail. With steady gaze he advanced, spear in hand. Suddenly the lion bounded forward, and, with another roar, sprang clean over the Prince's head. Then he ran joyously up to him, and began licking his hands with every demonstration of affection.

The Vizier called out to the Prince that he had conquered, and bade him leave the arena. The lion followed like a dog.

"As you now see, Prince Azgid," said the old Minister, "the lion is a tame one, and would injure no one. You, however, were ignorant of this fact, and have satisfactorily proved your courage and valour by your readiness to fight him. Now all will know that you are worthy to ascend the throne of your heroic ancestors."

Two men—one old, the other very young—came forward to congratulate the Prince. They were Oaxus and Isdril.


FRANK C. PAPÉ

"With steady gaze he advanced, spear in hand."

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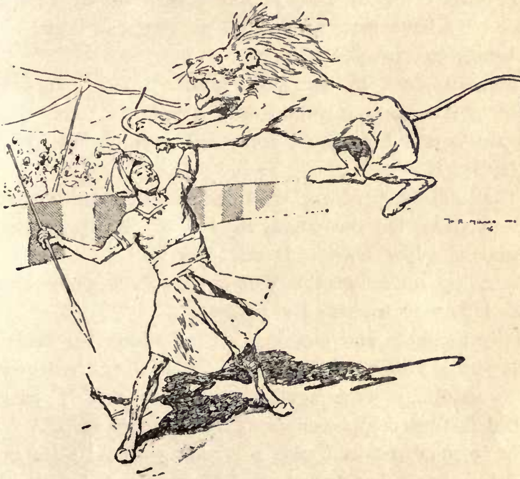
"Prince Azgid," said the old shepherd, "as a memento of this happy day, allow me to make you a present." So saying, he pushed forward his slave, Isdril.

"I heartily thank you, Oaxus!" said the Prince, "and you, Isdril, are no longer a slave. From this moment you are free; but you shall be my companion, and delight me with your skill upon the flute."



"THE LION SPRANG CLEAN OVER THE PRINCE'S HEAD" (*p.* 308).

Presently another little group presented itself. It was composed of Sheik Hajaar, some of his Arabs, and the horse which the Prince had learned to love.

"Azgid!" said the Sheik, "I congratulate you heartily, and beg your acceptance of this steed."

The Prince thanked and embraced the Sheik, and kissed the beautiful creature, who returned his caresses.

The Emir was the next person to appear upon the scene. He was surrounded by a brilliant retinue, with music and banners.

"I have come to congratulate you," said he to the Prince. "I have brought you no present, but I and all my belongings are yours."

"I am rejoiced to see you, noble Emir!" replied Azgid. "And how is your lovely daughter? As soon as I am crowned, I intend to set off at lightning speed to visit her!"

"That will be needless," said the Emir; "come with me." And he led the young man to a veiled lady, who sat upon a white horse. It was Perizide!

Then, by order of the Vizier, the whole procession wended its way towards the palace.

Many thoughts and emotions stirred within the breast of the young Prince. "When I fled from duty," reflected he, "everything went against me; now that I have fulfilled it, fresh happiness meets me at every step."

The coronation—and also a wedding—took place on the same day. Azgid and Perizide reigned long and happily. By the King's command, his adventures were recorded in the annals of the kingdom. And over the door of his palace were inscribed, in golden letters, these words: "*Never run from the lion.*"

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